



BUILDING BRIDGES AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM: A COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING APPROACH



Training Guide



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 **COGINTA**
Building safer communities. Promoting social justice.

BUILDING BRIDGES AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM: A COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING APPROACH



Training Guide

ABOUT COGINTA

Coginta is an independent and non-profit organization based in Switzerland that works to promote economic and social development by addressing the structural causes of instability, insecurity, and conflict. Its work lies at the intersection of security, access to justice, conflict prevention, and natural resource governance, recognizing that these dimensions are closely linked and essential to stability and social cohesion.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CE	Community Engagement
CP	Community Policing
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CT	Counter Terrorism
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GPS	Ghana Police Service
ILP	Intelligence-Led Policing
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam Wal-Muslimin
PCVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
RLVET	Radicalization that Leads to Violent Extremism and Terrorism
SARA	Scanning Analysis Result Assessment
SGBV/GBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
VE	Violent Extremism
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security Agenda



FOREWORD

Coginta seeks to support the Ghana Police Service (GPS) in strengthening community-oriented policing and preventing violent extremism through professional, trusted, and accountable security practices. This training manual has been developed to help police commanders work effectively with communities and address risks before they escalate into violence.

Preventing violent extremism requires more than just reactive security measures. It calls for early engagement, strong relationships, and policing that communities trust and with which they cooperate. In this, police commanders play a decisive role by setting priorities, guiding officers, and fostering constructive dialogue with local actors.

The purpose of this manual is to provide practical guidance to help police commanders integrate prevention into everyday policing. It aims to:

- > strengthen the understanding of violent extremism and its local drivers
- > build trust and legitimacy between police and communities
- > improve the functioning of professional, accountable, community-oriented services
- > apply preventive approaches that reduce risks before violence occurs

However, this guide does not advocate for replacing law enforcement with dialogue. Rather, it promotes a balanced approach combining enforcement with prevention, partnership, and respect for human rights, consistent with the good practices promoted by the African Union, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and the United Nations.

It is worth remembering that effective prevention starts at the local level. With the right skills, leadership, and levels of trust amongst the community, the police can act early, not only reducing tensions but strengthening security and social cohesion alike.

Clement Mweyang Aapengnuo
Country Director
Coginta Ghana

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

"It is late afternoon in a border district in northern Ghana. A District Police Commander receives a call from a respected community leader. A group of young men has been gathering at night near a market. There has been no crime. No weapons have been seen. But conversations have changed.

Some youths speak openly about injustice and exclusion. Others repeat messages heard online or from across the border – about identity, dignity, and the need to 'take action'. A few have stopped attending community meetings altogether.

The Police Commander now faces a familiar dilemma. Acting too early could be seen as harassment and deepen mistrust. Acting too late could mean losing the chance to prevent something far more serious. This situation does not yet call for arrests or force. It calls for listening, local knowledge, and trusted relationships with officers who know the community, understand its tensions, and can work with leaders, women, and youth before grievances harden into violence."

This is where prevention begins. This manual was written for situations like these.

The purpose therefore, is to equip Ghana Police Service (GPS) commanders with the knowledge, skills, and practical tools required to prevent violent extremism through community-oriented policing, while maintaining public trust, legitimacy, and professional standards.

It aims to support police leaders in integrating prevention into everyday policing functions: combining law enforcement responsibilities with partnership, dialogue, and accountability.

The manual focuses on four core objectives:

- > Strengthening understanding of violent extremism and its local drivers
 - See **Module 1:** Understanding Violent Extremism in the Ghanaian Context (pps. 12–35)
- > Building trust and constructive relationships with communities
 - See **Module 2:** Building Bridges: Engaging the Community (pps. 36–63)
- > Delivering community-oriented services professionally and ethically
 - See **Module 3:** Shifting Paradigms: Becoming a Community Problem-Solver (pps. 64–79)
- > Applying preventive approaches to reduce risks of radicalization and violence
 - See **Module 4:** Proactive Strategies to Prevent Violent Extremism (pps. 80–105)

This manual is not intended to replace law enforcement. Rather, it complements it by strengthening prevention, legitimacy, and cooperation, in line with good practices promoted by the African Union, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and the United Nations.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual is designed to be both practical and adaptable, making it suitable for a wide range of professional and operational contexts. It serves as a comprehensive resource to support continuous learning, enhance operational effectiveness, and foster a culture of ethical and community-focused policing. Users are encouraged to adapt the structure and content to address specific challenges, strengthen skills, and promote collaboration across teams and agencies. The manual can be used in the following ways:

- > Self-study or professional development: Officers and staff can use the manual for independent study, fostering personal growth and deepening their understanding of community policing, prevention strategies, and ethical standards



- Training sessions or workshops: Trainers can incorporate the manual into structured learning programmes, tailoring modules to address the needs of participants and encouraging active engagement through case studies, practical exercises, and discussions
- Group exercises and discussions: The manual provides a robust foundation for collaborative learning. Facilitators can use it to guide scenario-based activities, problem-solving sessions, and reflection on real-world challenges, supporting peer-to-peer knowledge sharing
- Operational planning: Commanders and planners may use the manual to inform strategy development, risk assessment, and the implementation of preventive measures that are aligned with best practices and tailored to local realities.

Trainers and commanders are encouraged to adapt the manual's content to suit the unique needs and priorities of their communities. This flexibility ensures its relevance across diverse environments, whether addressing emerging threats, strengthening partnerships, or promoting ethical conduct.

To maximise the manual's value, it is advisable to establish clear learning objectives at the outset. Whether undertaking self-study or group learning, setting these goals helps focus attention and measure progress. During training sessions, facilitators can select relevant modules and activities according to participants' experience and operational roles, thereby promoting meaningful knowledge exchange and practical skill development.

In collaborative settings, the manual acts as a springboard for focused discussion, scenario-based learning, and reflection on local challenges. Regular reviews and constructive feedback allow teams to refine approaches and ensure that the manual's guidance remains responsive to evolving organizational needs. Users are strongly encouraged to supplement the material with local examples, case studies, and operational guidelines, thereby enhancing its practical relevance and impact within their specific context.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This manual is intended primarily for police commanders, senior officers, trainers, and operational leaders of the Ghana Police Service who are responsible for community engagement, prevention, and local security management.

It is particularly relevant for officers working in complex environments where early signs of radicalization do not yet constitute crimes. Against a backdrop of tensions, heavy-handed responses could undermine trust.

In addition to this primary audience, the manual also benefits a range of complementary stakeholders involved in community safety and countering violent extremism. These include:

- Community policing units and officers dedicated to building relationships with local residents
- Local government authorities responsible for public safety and community development
- Civil society organizations and NGOs working in the areas of violence prevention, youth engagement, or peacebuilding
- Traditional and religious leaders who play a pivotal role in maintaining community cohesion and resolving tensions
- Educational institutions and trainers delivering workshops on social resilience and conflict resolution
- Security sector partners, such as immigration officials, customs officers, and border management personnel
- International agencies supporting law enforcement capacity-building and prevention programmes

By involving these complementary audiences, organizations can foster a more holistic approach to prevention, thereby strengthening cooperation across multiple sectors. Trainers and commanders should share the manual with relevant partners and adapt its materials for broader use, thus maximizing its impact and supporting sustainable security outcomes for all.

INTRODUCTION

THE GROWING THREAT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA

Radicalization leading to violent extremism or terrorism is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon. It does not arise from a single cause, but from the interaction of social, economic, political, cultural, and historical factors which, over time, can push or pull individuals towards violence. Across West Africa, violent extremist activity has increased significantly in recent years, deepening insecurity, fragmenting communities, and challenging traditional approaches to law enforcement.

While the Sahel remains the epicentre of Violent Extremism and Terrorism (VET), the security landscape continues to evolve, and the threat is gradually spilling over into the littoral states along the Gulf of Guinea. Countries such as Togo, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire have recently recorded an increase in attacks or identified the presence of terrorist networks within their territories. Over the past decade, extremist groups have demonstrated an increasing ability to expand beyond their initial areas of operation and project influence across borders.

Ghana has not been immune to these dynamics. Its geographical proximity to affected countries, strong cross-border interactions, and regional mobility patterns increase its exposure to spillover risks. The northern regions of the country face a combination of structural vulnerabilities, including poverty, limited infrastructure, youth unemployment, perceptions of marginalization, porous borders, population movements, and localized conflicts (exploited by violent extremist groups elsewhere in the region).

POTENTIAL ENTRY POINTS FOR VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN NORTHERN GHANA

Structural disparities between northern and southern Ghana significantly compound the risks associated with violent extremism. The five northernmost regions – Upper East, Upper West, North East, Savannah, and Northern – have some of the highest poverty rates in the country. According to the Ghana Statistical Service and national poverty mapping data, districts like Wa West, East Gonja, and Builsa South record particularly high poverty headcounts. Despite recent progress, these regions continue to lag behind southern areas in terms of development and access to services.

Additionally, the presence of numerous unofficial border crossings increases vulnerability to infiltration by armed groups and illicit trafficking. Other factors further exacerbate risks, including refugee inflows, intra-religious tensions, farmer–herder conflicts, land disputes, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), and the politicization of local grievances. Chieftaincy disputes, youth vigilantism, and competition over natural resources such as gold, bauxite, and rosewood place an additional strain on social cohesion.

Collectively, these dynamics create environments where grievances can deepen and trust in institutions can weaken. They also place significant pressure on law enforcement agencies, particularly the police, to maintain order while preventing tensions from escalating.

In such contexts, prevention becomes not only more challenging, but also more essential.

GHANA'S STRATEGY FOR PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

In response, Ghana has adopted a comprehensive approach to preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism. The **National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism (NAFPCVET)**,¹ launched in 2019, provides a strategic blueprint to address the spread of violent extremism and terrorism within Ghana and the broader West African region.

1 <https://www.peacecouncil.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/NAFPCVET-Document-29-Jan-2020.pdf>



The Framework is built around four mutually reinforcing pillars:

Prevent – Measures that address root causes, build resilience, and reduce vulnerability to violent extremist narratives and recruitment

Pre-empt – Early detection and proactive actions to deter and disrupt violent extremist or terrorist activity before it escalates

Protect – Safeguarding people, communities, property, critical infrastructure, mobility corridors, and cyberspace from extremist threats

Respond – Strengthening national capacity to respond effectively to incidents and restore stability as quickly as possible

Together, these pillars recognize that prevention, preparedness, protection, and response must operate simultaneously to ensure long-term security and resilience.

GHANA'S RELIANCE ON COMMUNITY POLICING AS PART OF THE STRATEGY TO COMBAT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Traditional policing approaches, while necessary, are often reactive. Recognizing the need for earlier and more collaborative forms of engagement, the Ghana Police Service (GPS) established a Community Policing Unit in 2002 and has progressively expanded community policing measures nationwide. In 2020, the GPS further strengthened this approach through the Enhanced Visibility and Community Policing Strategy.

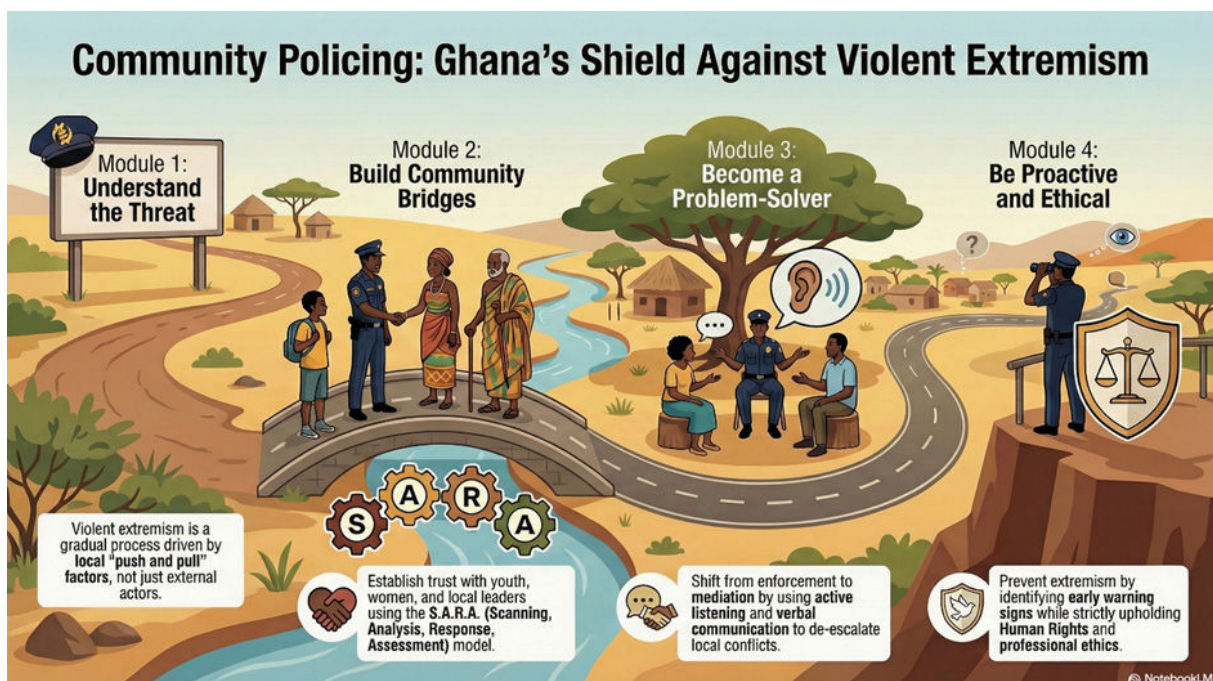
Community-oriented policing is grounded in inclusivity, dialogue, and trust between the police, local authorities, and communities, especially in highly vulnerable contexts. When it comes to preventing violent extremism, effective prevention depends on a shared responsibility for security, rather than relying solely on security services.

Trust is built through regular interaction, consistent engagement, transparency, and professional conduct that respects human rights. When communities trust the police, they are more likely to share information, raise concerns early, and work collaboratively to address emerging risks.

However, a limited understanding of violent extremism and insufficient training on preventive approaches remain significant challenges. For the Ghana Police Service to engage effectively in prevention efforts, officers must be equipped to differentiate between violent extremism and legitimate dissent, as well as being capable of recognizing early warning signs and working with communities to develop locally appropriate solutions.

Police commanders can benefit from this manual for the following reasons:

- > Violent extremism often manifests itself before violence actually occurs, whether through narratives, grievances, and/or local tensions encountered by the police on a daily basis
- > Early preventive engagement is typically more effective and less costly than reactive security responses
- > Trust between police and communities determines whether early warning signs are shared or remain hidden
- > Community-oriented policing provides practical tools to prevent the escalation of tensions, while upholding human rights and professional ethics



MODULE 1

UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE GHANAIAN CONTEXT

This module is designed to equip police officers, local authorities, and community leaders with a foundational understanding of violent extremism within Ghana. Its intention is to clarify the key concepts and drivers of violent extremism, distinguish it from legitimate dissent, and highlight the importance of early identification and collaborative prevention. By exploring the local context, pathways, and risk factors, participants will learn how to recognize early warning signs and contribute to effective community-based strategies for preventing escalation. The module fosters inclusivity, dialogue, and trust-building, emphasizing a shared responsibility for security and the practical application of human rights and professional ethics in countering violent extremism.

UNIT 1 – OUTLINING CONCEPTS RELATED TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM (VE)	13
Learn about the key concepts related to violent extremism	
UNIT 2 – PATHWAYS INTO VIOLENT EXTREMISM: RISKS, DRIVERS, AND EARLY WARNING SIGNS	18
Learn how to identify pathways, risk factors, and early warning signs of violent extremism, to support timely, lawful, and preventive interventions	
UNIT 3 – VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE SAHEL: A CHALLENGE FOR GHANA	25
Learn about the complex dynamics of violent extremism in the Sahel region and the potential impact on Ghana	
UNIT 4 – DISRUPTING THE PATH TO VIOLENCE: PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM	28
Learn how to become proactive agents of prevention rather than reactive responders to violence	
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Annex 1B – District Risk Mapping Worksheet	
Annex 1C – Rapid Prevention Action Guide	

UNIT 1 – OUTLINING CONCEPTS RELATED TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

UNDERSTAND KEY CONCEPTS RELATED TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 1 “OUTLINING CONCEPTS RELATED TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM”

1.1 Terrorism	There is no universally agreed-upon definition for terrorism, extremism, or radicalism. Police must therefore rely on law, proportionality, and context , not labels.
1.2 Extremism & radicalization	<p>Radical ideas and dissent do not automatically lead to violence and should not be treated as security threats in themselves.</p> <p>Understanding the societal, cultural, and political context is crucial to differentiating between legitimate dissent and extremism.</p> <p>Violent extremism becomes a policing concern only when beliefs translate into incitement, preparation for and use of violence.</p>
1.3 Violence	<p>Violence can manifest as direct physical harm, structural inequalities, or cultural norms that promote violence.</p> <p>Effective prevention focuses on actions and behaviours, not on mainstream beliefs or identity.</p>



1.4 Plurality of VE Violent extremism is not just a single group or religion, but a complex mix of **religious, political, and resource-driven threats** carried out by **diverse actors** ranging from large armed groups to local criminal networks and lone individuals.

This unit clarifies the core concepts related to violent extremism in order to support police officers in distinguishing between legitimate dissent, radical ideas, extremism, and violence. It provides a conceptual foundation for prevention-oriented policing by emphasizing legality, proportionality, and respect for human rights.

1.1 TERRORISM IS THE USE OF VIOLENCE IN PURSUIT OF A HIGHER GOAL

There is no consensus around the concept of *terrorism* in international law. It is primarily defined as **the use of violence against civilians to intimidate people into supporting a political or ideological agenda**, and to achieve a specific goal. Some common features include:

- > Attempts to undermine democracy by trying to influence policy and law makers
- > Targets can be life, limb, or property
- > Inspires fear and terror amongst the population



According to the 762 Act of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana (anti-terrorism Act, 2008) *“an act is a **terrorist act if it is performed in furtherance of a political, ideological, religious,***

racial, or ethnic cause.” The Act adds that, in the context of an armed conflict, a terrorist act is an act which intends to **“intimidate the population or compel the Government** or an international organization to do or refrain from doing an act, or cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian not taking part in the hostility.”²

While terrorism refers to acts of violence, understanding violent extremism also requires distinguishing between radical ideas, extremist beliefs, and the use of violence.

1.2 RADICAL OR EXTREME ATTITUDES ONLY BECOME PROBLEMATIC WHEN THEY PROMOTE THE USE OF VIOLENCE

1.2.1 RADICALIZATION

It is important to remember that radicals – **those desiring extreme changes in the societal order** – have existed in our societies for centuries, often bringing about valued changes. For example, those who fought against apartheid in South Africa were considered radicals by the authorities when they commenced their struggle.

Similar fights against human rights injustices are continued by radicals to this day, especially on social media. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook have seen the rise of online radical activism, with hashtags becoming rallying points for young people frustrated by police brutality and corruption. Therefore, radicalization by itself is **not necessarily problematic**.

2 <https://www.mint.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Anti-Terrorism-Act-2008-Act-762.pdf>

1.2.2. EXTREMISM

This manual defines extremism as a **rigid adherence to narratives or belief systems that challenge the core values of mainstream society**. This includes political and religious ideologies. However, this definition presents a challenge. What constitutes “mainstream values” can vary depending on the society. For example, in many countries, minority religious groups may insist on narrowly defined narratives, principles, and values that reject the mainstream values of the dominant society. In societies that value freedom of religious practices, these differing beliefs are not problematic.

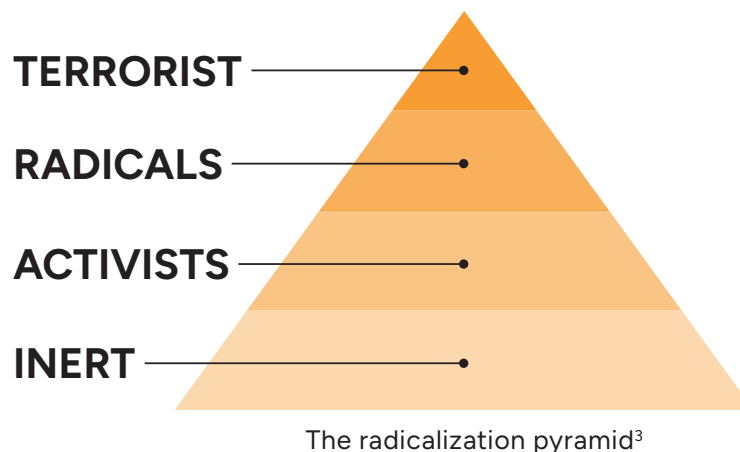
It is only when people resort to acts of **violence in the pursuit of their beliefs** and objectives that their actions can be considered acts of violent extremism. It is important to note, however, that not all members of these extremist groups promote, believe in, or take part in violence. Therefore, they may not all become violent extremists.

In other words, extremism and radicalization do not necessarily predict violent behaviours but **can only provide a clue that someone may be gravitating towards violent extremism**.

1.2.3. FOCUS ON VIOLENCE

Police commanders must bear these nuances in mind and uphold the right to freedom of belief and expression. They should **focus on “violence” and actions that violate the law**. While some groups may hold dissenting or unpopular views, extremism and radicalization become a concern when these views incite violence or justify attacks on those with different beliefs. **The key lies in identifying groups that actively promote violence or actions that threaten public safety**, or those who harbour a hatred against any who don’t share their ideology.

Moreover, the process of moving towards violent extremism can take weeks, months, or even years. Conclusions about radicals are often drawn from focusing on **the small number of extremists at the top of the “radicalization pyramid” who are willing to use violence in the pursuit of their cause**. However, the percentage of radicals who refuse to use violence is often overlooked.



3 Clark McCauley & Sophia Moskalenko. *Toward a Profile of Lone Wolf Terrorists: What Moves an Individual From Radical Opinion to Radical Action, Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2014, 26:1, 69-85 – <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ftpv20>



Therefore, police forces must keep in mind that detaining, shunning, or otherwise punishing a person who embraces radical ideas on the assumption that he or she may one day turn violent is not only unjust, but also counterproductive. It can create grievances that motivate that individual to actually turn to violent extremism in the future.

It is also important to note that individuals may turn to violent extremism without going through an ideologically based radicalization process at all. **Ideology is only one part of a complex process in the creation of a violent extremist.**

1.3 VIOLENCE CAN BE DIRECT, STRUCTURAL, OR CULTURAL

Violence is a broad term encompassing acts that **cause harm**. It can be **physical, psychological**, or even a threat that creates fear. However, violence isn't only limited to just direct actions. Sociologist Johan Galtung has developed a three-part typology that helps us to understand violence in its entirety:⁴

- A. **Direct violence:** The most recognizable form, where someone intentionally uses physical force to injure or kill another person. It also includes verbal threats and aggression
- B. **Structural violence:** A more indirect form of violence. It refers to how social, political, and economic systems are organized in a way that harms certain groups. This can be through unequal access to resources, opportunities, and necessities like healthcare or education. For instance, a person from a marginalized community might be denied a job opportunity due to corruption within the hiring process. This is not a direct act of violence, but the underlying system of corruption creates barriers that disproportionately affect certain groups, limiting their economic opportunities and perpetuating inequality
- C. **Cultural violence:** This refers to those aspects of culture that normalize or justify violence, both direct and structural. It can be found in social norms (honour killings, witchcraft accusations, and blood feuds), language, art, religion, and even science. It encompasses the deep-rooted beliefs, attitudes, and values that are used to justify or normalize violence, making it seem okay or even an expected outcome

1.4 A PLURALITY OF IDEOLOGIES AND ACTORS CHARACTERIZE VIOLENT EXTREMISM

It is important to stress the plurality of radicalization and violent extremism in West Africa (and beyond). The region faces a complex situation, with multiple ideologies in action:

- a) **Religious extremism** (e.g., Boko Haram, in Nigeria, often use a distorted interpretation of religion to justify violence)
- b) **Political extremism** (grievances against governments, extreme adherence to a political party, corruption, and lack of economic opportunities can lead some to resort to VE as a means of achieving political change)
- c) **Resource-based extremism** (competition for control of resources like oil or minerals can fuel conflict and create opportunities for extremist groups to exploit these tensions)

4 Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" in *Journal of Peace Research*/Sage Publications, Volume 6, issue 3, 1969.

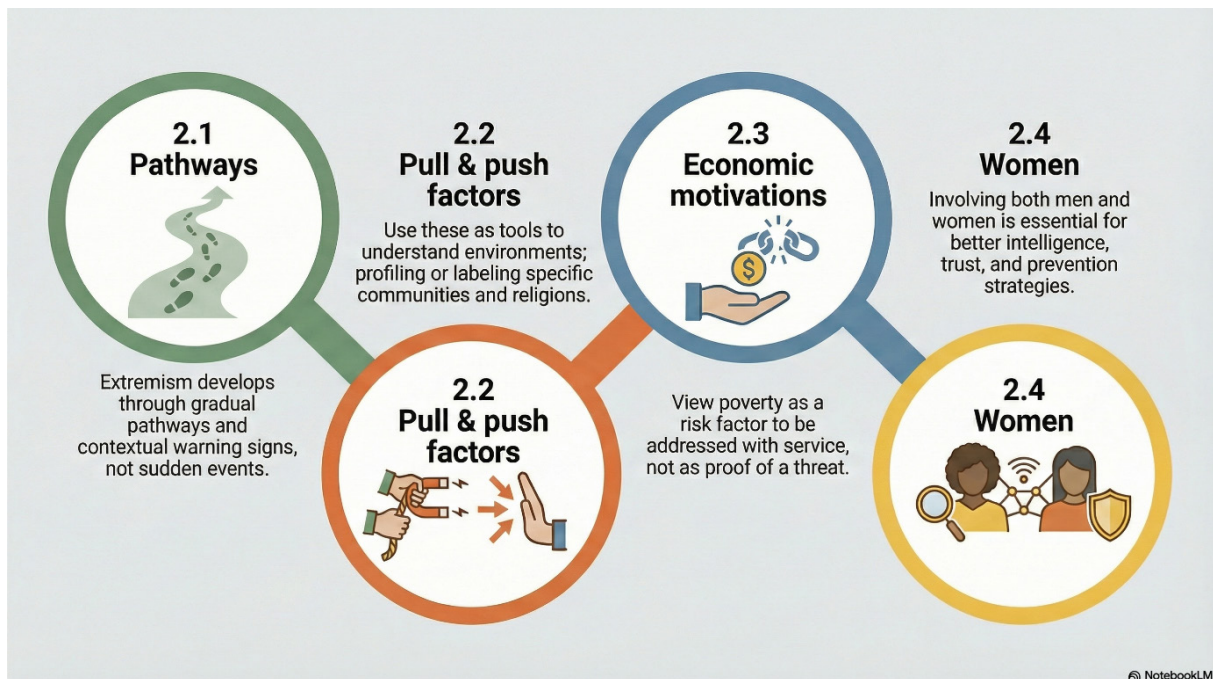
The actors are equally diverse:

- a) Established **non-state armed groups** like Boko Haram, the Islamic State in West Africa Province, and JNIM are major players, but there are also smaller, localized groups with specific agendas
- b) **Criminal networks/groups** may adopt extremist rhetoric or collaborate with extremist organizations for mutual benefit
- c) Some groups strongly affiliate with **political parties**, resulting in hate speech and violence against those who do not share their ideas and vision for society
- d) **Individuals**: Violent extremism isn't limited to any one group. It can be the act of a single individual



UNIT 2 – PATHWAYS INTO VIOLENT EXTREMISM: RISKS, DRIVERS, AND EARLY WARNING SIGNS

IDENTIFY PATHWAYS, RISK FACTORS, AND EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM, TO SUPPORT TIMELY, LAWFUL, AND PREVENTIVE INTERVENTIONS



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 2 “PATHWAYS INTO VIOLENT EXTREMISM: RISKS, DRIVERS, AND EARLY WARNING SIGNS”

- 2.1 Pathways** Violent extremism develops through pathways and warning signs, not sudden events.
Early warning signs are contextual indicators of risk, not proof of criminal intent.

<p>2.2 Push & pull factors</p>	<p>Violent extremism is not exclusive to any region, ideology, political movement, religious belief, or ethnicity. Assumptions and profiling can undermine effective policing.</p> <p>Violent extremism cannot be explained by a single cause, nor can it be reliably predicted.</p> <p>Push and pull factors are analytical tools used to understand environments and vulnerabilities. They should never be used to label individuals or communities.</p>
<p>2.3 Economic motivations</p>	<p>While poverty and unemployment create a sense of injustice that may be exploited by extremists, the police should view socio-economic hardship as a risk factor to be addressed through trust and service, rather than assuming that every disadvantaged person poses a potential threat.</p>
<p>2.4 Women</p>	<p>Gender-sensitive approaches enhance prevention, intelligence gathering, and trust. The involvement of both men AND women is crucial for PCVE strategies and CP.</p>

This unit examines how individuals and groups may move towards violent extremism, why some environments are more vulnerable than others, and what police officers may observe before violence occurs. It does not present a checklist or predictive model. Violent extremism **cannot be explained by a single cause**, nor can it be reliably predicted. Instead, the unit introduces analytical lenses that help police commanders **understand risk environments, recognize warning signs**, and engage early, without criminalizing beliefs, identities, or communities.

2.1 PATHWAYS TOWARD VE ARE GRADUAL AND SHAPED BY THE ENVIRONMENT

Violent extremism rarely emerges suddenly. It often develops through a **gradual process**, where grievances, questions about identity, and exposure to extremist narratives interact over time. This progression may take weeks, months, or even years, and it does not follow a linear path.

Violent extremists distinguish themselves not by their beliefs alone, but by their **willingness to use violence**,⁵ or to justify, encourage, or prepare for the use of violence in order to impose ideological, political, or religious objectives. Such violence may include the use or promotion of weapons and explosives, hate crimes, violent riots, or calls for harm against individuals or groups with opposing views.

No political, ideological, or religious cause can justify violence. At the same time, **violent extremism does not arise in a vacuum**. Narratives of grievance, whether real or perceived, often gain traction in contexts marked by human rights violations, poor governance, exclusion, or frustrated aspirations. In such environments, **extremist narratives may offer simplified explanations, a sense of purpose, or promises of empowerment through violence**.

The conduct of the police force plays a critical role in these dynamics. Perceptions of police impunity, arbitrary detention, discrimination, or abuse can unintentionally reinforce grievances and make violent narratives more appealing. Conversely, **professional, lawful, and accountable policing can disrupt a move towards violence**.

5 https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2021/2/PVE_TrainingManual-min.pdf



What the police should look out for in the early stages:

- > Shifts in narratives: an increasing use of “us versus them” language, dehumanization, or justification of violence
- > Social withdrawal: disengagement from community life or institutions
- > Heightened expression of grievances linked to identity, injustice, or exclusion
- > Increased exposure to extremist messaging online or through peer networks

Again, these indicators **do not constitute crimes**. They signal contexts where **early engagement and prevention** may be appropriate.

2.2 THE INTERPLAY OF PUSH AND PULL FACTORS IN CREATING CONDITIONS FOR VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Numerous studies show that violent extremism is multifactorial and extremely diverse, both in terms of the elements that influence it and the forms in which it appears. **No single driver can explain why individuals or groups engage in violence.** It cannot be predicted by considering only one of the factors, because if that was the case, it would be easy to find the “vaccine” or a definitive solution to counter it.

Instead, violent extremism emerges from the **interaction of structural conditions, group dynamics, and individual vulnerabilities**. People are driven towards it by a complex interplay of external pressures and internal vulnerabilities. It can stem from feelings of social or economic injustice, political oppression, or even a twisted interpretation of religion. To effectively counter violent extremism, we need to understand these factors, often categorized as push and pull factors.

2.2.1 PUSH FACTORS: ALIENATING SOCIETAL PRESSURES

Push factors refer to factors that are structural within society. They are the broader social, political, and economic conditions that create **grievances** and make individuals feel marginalized. These can include:

- > **Socio-economic disadvantage:** Poverty, lack of education and job opportunities, and social inequality can fuel feelings of hopelessness and resentment
- > **Political oppression:** Authoritarian regimes, human rights abuses, and lack of political participation can lead to frustration and a desire for radical change
- > **Group marginalization:** Discrimination, social exclusion, and prejudice based on religion, ethnicity, or nationality can create a sense of alienation and a desire for belonging
- > **Perceived injustice:** A sense of historical or ongoing injustice towards a particular group can be a powerful motivator when it comes to extremist ideologies

Such conditions can erode trust in institutions and increase receptivity to violent narratives, especially when grievances remain unaddressed.

2.2.2 PULL FACTORS: ATTRACTING INDIVIDUAL VULNERABILITIES

Pull factors are the individual motives, as well as the psychological and social needs that make someone susceptible to violent extremist narratives and behaviours. These can include:

- > **Identity crisis:** Individuals struggling with a sense of belonging, purpose, or self-esteem may be drawn to the clear identity and purpose offered by extremist groups
- > **Sense of isolation:** Loneliness, social alienation, or a lack of support networks can make

- individuals vulnerable to online or in-person recruitment by extremist groups
- > **Psychological distress:** Mental health issues like depression, anxiety, or feelings of hopelessness can make individuals more susceptible to extremist narratives that promise strong answers and solutions
 - > **Charismatic leadership:** Competent, persuasive leaders who exploit grievances and offer a sense of belonging can be a powerful pull factor for vulnerable individuals
 - > **Promise of adventure:** Action and excitement can be a pull factor despite the potential dangers involved

These factors often transform grievances into **action**, particularly when reinforced by group dynamics.

2.2.3 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push and pull factors interact in complex ways and must be analyzed together. **Each of these factors should be considered equally important, interrelated, and not isolated from each other.**

Someone experiencing social marginalization (push factor) may be more receptive to an extremist ideology that promises empowerment (pull factor).

For example, a young man from a marginalized clan, living in a rural area with limited access to education and employment (push factors), may be drawn to an extremist group that offers financial incentives, status, a sense of belonging, and the opportunity to fight against what they perceive as oppression (pull factors). Understanding this interaction is essential for prevention, as it highlights **where and how engagement, support, and protection may be most effective.**

A charismatic leader (pull factor) may be particularly appealing to someone struggling with a sense of identity (pull factor). **If we do not understand the psychology behind each of them, we will not be able to prevent other similar cases.**

Understanding these interactions is crucial for:

- > **Developing effective counter-extremism programmes:** By addressing both societal grievances (push factors) and individual vulnerabilities (pull factors), we can make communities a less fertile ground for extremist ideologies
- > **Identifying individuals at risk:** Recognizing the signs of push and pull factors can help us intervene before someone becomes radicalized
- > **The presence of these factors doesn't guarantee that someone will become violent.** Many people experience these challenges without resorting to extremism. However, understanding these dynamics is a vital step in preventing violent extremism and fostering more peaceful and inclusive societies

Furthermore, contextualizing the various modes of radicalization that lead to violent extremism is crucial, as this step concerns issues that arise not only locally but also nationally and internationally.



CASE STUDY #2.2: NIGERIA: HOW THE MARGINALIZATION OF FULBE HERDERS CAN LEAD TO EXPLOITATION BY VE GROUPS

The situation of Fulbe herders in Nigeria illustrates how structural vulnerabilities can intersect with extremist recruitment. The Fulbe people, primarily nomadic herders, have faced increasing marginalization in various West African countries. This social exclusion has resulted in a fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root.

Push Factors: Social Marginalization

In Nigeria, the expansion of agriculture and growing urbanization have encroached on traditional Fulbe grazing lands, leading to violent clashes with farmers. This has resulted in land conflicts, the displacement of Fulbe communities, loss of livelihoods, and a sense of marginalization.

Fulbe herders often live in poverty, with limited access to education, healthcare, and other essential services. This economic disparity has created a significant gap between them and the broader Nigerian population, contributing to feelings of alienation and resentment.

In recent years, Fulbe herders have been increasingly stigmatized as criminals and terrorists, linked to the activities of armed groups. This negative portrayal has eroded their social standing and made them targets of discrimination and violence.

Pull Factors: Extremist Ideology

In the face of these challenges, some Fulbe youth have become vulnerable to the allure of extremist ideologies that promise empowerment and a sense of belonging.

Extremist groups often offer financial incentives (perceived as economic opportunities) to new recruits. This is particularly attractive to young Fulbe men experiencing unemployment and poverty.

By joining an extremist group, individuals can gain a social status, a sense of identity and purpose, especially if they feel marginalized and excluded from mainstream society.

The promise of retribution against perceived enemies, such as farmers or government officials, can be a powerful motivator for those who have experienced loss and injustice.

This example underscores the importance of **considering both push and pull factors**. Marginalization does not systematically make a community extremist, but it can create conditions which may be exploited by extremist actors.

2.3 ECONOMIC HARDSHIP IS A RISK FACTOR BUT NOT A PREDICTOR OF VIOLENCE

Lack of socio-economic opportunities can take different forms and affect individuals in different ways. Research has shown that **economic factors can contribute to one's vulnerability** to violent extremism, particularly where economic exclusion, unemployment, and limited opportunities for upward mobility generate frustration, alienation, and a sense of injustice. The UNDP Report on Preventing Violent Extremism (2017) highlights economic exclusion as one of the factors that may increase susceptibility to radicalization, thereby underscoring the importance of inclusive and sustainable development, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 8.

Unemployment and limited economic opportunities, particularly amongst young people, can erode confidence in institutions and weaken respect for laws and social norms. In such contexts, **extremist narratives appear to offer an alternative path to dignity, purpose, or recognition**.

A World Bank study, *Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism* (2016), further suggests that indicators of economic exclusion are associated with higher levels of **radical attitudes** and **increased grievances towards the state**. Individuals who feel excluded may be more likely to express frustration and mistrust towards public authorities, creating conditions open to exploitation by extremist actors.

Although some statistical data suggests some form of link between violence and lack of economic opportunities, caution should be exercised in drawing premature conclusions about this. **Economic hardship alone does not cause violent extremism**, nor does it affect all individuals in the same way. Many people experience unemployment or inequality without resorting to violence. In addition, **individuals involved in terrorist activities are not always economically deprived or poorly educated**. Highly educated and economically secure individuals also engage in extremist violence.

In terms of policing and prevention, socio-economic disadvantage should be understood as a **contextual risk factor, but not a determinant or predictor of violence**. Effective prevention requires an attention to grievances and exclusion, combined with lawful, trust-based engagement, rather than mere assumptions about who may or may not become violent.

2.4 WOMEN AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

"If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family (nation)", Dr. James Emman Kwegyir-Aggrey⁶ (1875-1927).

A **gender-sensitive approach** is crucial when it comes to addressing the complex issue of women and violent extremism. This involves incorporating a gender perspective into all aspects of prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation efforts. By understanding the specific challenges and opportunities faced by women, the police and law enforcement agencies in general, can develop more effective strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism.

2.4.1 WOMEN AS VICTIMS

It is crucial for police commanders to understand the unique vulnerabilities of women in the context of extremism. They often endure **horrific violence**, including killings, sexual assault, forced marriage, and enslavement. These experiences can have long-lasting social, physical and psychological consequences. Additionally, women and girls may be **displaced** from their homes, losing access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

2.4.2 WOMEN AS PERPETRATORS

While overlooked, women can play diverse, and context-specific roles within extremist groups.⁷ Their involvement may range from **logistical support, intelligence gathering, and recruitment** to direct participation in combat and suicide attacks. Some violent extremist groups deliberately adapt their strategies to **use women in violent actions**, partly because women may attract less suspicion. For example, women in Boko Haram have long been documented as suicide bombers, carrying out attacks in public places. This demonstrates the evolving nature of women's involvement in extremism, challenging traditional stereotypes. Furthermore, women can play a **significant role in radicalizing others**, using their social networks to spread extremist ideologies, to facilitate the recruitment of new members, and legitimize violent acts.

Their motivations for joining extremist groups are complex and often **differ from those of men**. While men may be more frequently motivated by ideology, status, or armed struggle, women's pathways can also include **coercion, survival, protection, revenge** for the loss of family members,

⁶ Ghanaian intellectual, missionary, and teacher.

⁷ Fatima Lahnait, *Pasionarias. De l'engagement des femmes dans les mouvements violents et les conflits armés*, Harmattan, 2018, 244 pages.



forced marriage, or the **search for security, belonging, or economic support**. For example, women displaced by conflict may join extremist groups to secure food, protection, or safety for themselves and their children, even if they were not initially ideologically committed.

Understanding these distinct pathways is critical for police officers, as women involved in violent extremism should not be viewed solely as victims or supporters, but as actors whose roles, motivations, and risks require context-specific assessment and response.

2.4.3 WOMEN AS PREVENTERS

Women can be **powerful agents of change** in preventing violent extremism. They often serve as the backbone of their communities, working to reconcile divided groups and promote social cohesion. Their initiatives have often been instrumental in reducing tensions and preventing further violence.

Empowering women through education, economic opportunities, and leadership roles can help build resilient communities. Additionally, women can play a vital role in **early warning systems**. Their deep-rooted connections within communities enable them to identify (when trained) signs of radicalization and report suspicious activities to authorities. Thus, empowering women to **participate in community policing and intelligence gathering** (especially in areas where men are not allowed) can significantly enhance prevention efforts.

CASE STUDY #2.4: NIGERIA: MORE WOMEN POLICE FOR MORE EFFECTIVE PREVENTION

Until recently, the Nigerian police force was very conservative about the role of women within their establishment. Given the situation in the northeast of the country and the fight against violent extremism, the force has had to evolve over the years by recruiting more women.⁸

2.4.4 WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY



To promote a greater inclusion of women in the security field, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection has developed Ghana's second National Action Plan (GHANAP2, five-year period, 2020-2024) for

the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).⁹

The overall goal of GHANAP2 is to build inclusive, secure, and peaceful societies for women and girls in Ghana. It is structured according to the main UNSCR 1325 pillars:

- > **Participation** involves including women in decision-making processes related to peace and security
- > **Prevention** focuses on preventing violence against women and girls, as well as increasing women's role in conflict prevention and countering extremism
- > **Protection** aims to safeguard women's human and legal rights, particularly in conflict zones, and extends to protecting women from gender-based violence in the context of preventing violent extremism
- > **Relief** and **Recovery** emphasize gender equality in post-conflict rebuilding processes, including addressing the specific needs of women and girls affected by terrorism

8 Kemy Okenyodo, "Women responding to violent extremism in Nigeria" in Chowdhury & al., *A Man's World*, Hedayah, 2016, pps. 102-116.

9 Adopted in October 2000, the UNSCR 1325 recognized the disproportionate and distinct impact of armed conflict on women and girls and called for women to be full participants in all aspects of peacebuilding.

UNIT 3 – VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE SAHEL: A CHALLENGE FOR GHANA

UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEX DYNAMICS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE SAHEL AND ASSESS ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON GHANA

3.1 Expansion from the Sahel

SAHEL

INSTABILITY

POVERTY

WEAK GOVERNANCE

GHANA

Extremist groups spread across borders into Ghana.

3.2 Potential drivers in Ghana

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

ETHNIC TENSIONS

MISINFORMATION

Police must work with communities to fix internal issues.

Look Beyond Border Threats: True security comes from addressing the social vulnerabilities that extremist groups exploit.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 3 “VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE SAHEL: A CHALLENGE FOR GHANA”

3.1 Expansion from the Sahel	Instability in the Sahel creates poverty, weak governance, and social breakdown that can be exploited by violent extremist groups, allowing them to spread across borders into coastal countries like Ghana.
3.2 Potential drivers in Ghana	To prevent violent extremism in Ghana, police must look beyond border threats and work with communities to address internal vulnerabilities like youth unemployment, ethnic tensions, and misinformation before these are exploited by violent extremist groups.



3.1 SAHEL INSTABILITY FOSTERS THE EXPANSION OF VE TO THE COASTAL STATES

Regional crises in West Africa can act as a breeding ground for violent extremism. They bring about the following:

- > **Breakdown of social order:** Crises disrupt social norms and institutions, creating a sense of chaos and instability. This can make people more receptive to extremist ideologies that offer simple solutions to complex problems
- > **Economic hardship:** The disruption of economic livelihood can lead to job losses, poverty, food insecurity, and the forced displacement of populations. These hardships can make people more desperate and willing to resort to violence
- > **Humanitarian crisis:** Displacement due to conflict, poverty, and climate change creates a fertile ground for extremist recruitment
- > **Weak governance:** Political instability in some areas makes people more receptive to extremist narratives that promise order and a better life

These crises exacerbate social, political, and economic inequalities and grievances, generating the anger, frustration, and despair that extremist groups exploit. VE groups **manipulate people's fears and anxieties** through various communication channels, including social media. This allows VE groups to spread their propaganda, expand their influence, launch attacks, and recruit new members. The result is a **vicious cycle**. Extremist violence weakens governance and worsens humanitarian crises, creating more opportunities for extremist recruitment.

With the expansion of the operational space of violent extremist groups into **coastal countries**, these breeding grounds can also spread. Cross-border movements, arms trafficking, displacement, and the spread of extremist narratives facilitate expansion across borders. VE groups exploit local grievances, test state responses, and establish support networks beyond their original areas of operation.

3.2 POTENTIAL DRIVERS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN GHANA

Violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel has far-reaching consequences that could affect or exacerbate the situation at local level in northern Ghana. These complex systemic emerging threats have the potential to disrupt and derail years of peace and stability in the country. The actual drivers of violent extremism in West Africa that could potentially affect Ghana include:

DOMAIN	MANIFESTATIONS
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Erosion of law and order, fostering a climate of fear and insecurity > Provision of social services by radical groups > Youth alienation and the lure of charismatic leaders > External influences in the form of global politics > Electoral processes sometimes trigger tensions, creating conditions that extremists can exploit
Social cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Social cohesion is weakened as communities become polarized along ethnic, clan, or religious lines and compete over socio-economic privileges > Inter-religious conflicts are exacerbated through doctrinal rivalries > Marginalization (perceived or real)
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Economic development is hampered, deterring investments and creating joblessness, especially amongst young people who are often targeted for recruitment by extremist groups
Communication (cross-cutting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The spread of misinformation, fake news, and hate speech fuels division and mistrust

While the state often perceives violent extremism as an external threat and thus focuses more on **preventing the spillover and infiltration** of extremists from neighbouring countries, local communities in the northern part of the country are affected by **internal socio-economic and political pressures, subtle cross-border interactions**, and **survival strategies** that leave desperate populations, especially young people, vulnerable to radicalization.

As identified in the UNDP's *Journey to Extremism* report, Ghana's West African neighbours like Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Mali, and Niger have all recorded cases of extremist violence emanating from the **radicalization of vulnerable youth**.¹⁰

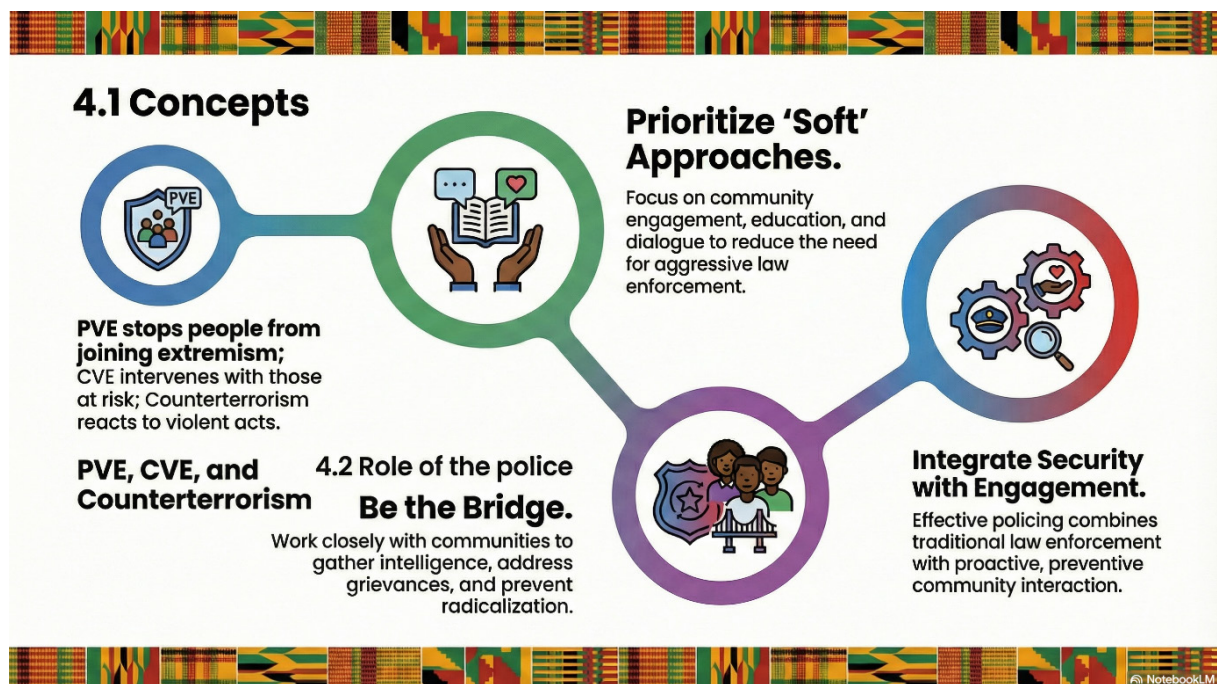
Violent extremism fosters fear, mistrust, intercultural clashes, conflict, destruction, and unrest. It cannot be addressed through a single solution or tool. A **comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach** is essential. Collaboration between the police and local communities is key to preventing and countering violent extremism. This includes raising awareness and mobilizing local actors, sharing best practices and information, as well as engaging communities to identify and address vulnerabilities.

10 UNDP, *Journey to Extremism in Africa*, <https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/enter>



UNIT 4 – DISRUPTING THE PATH TO VIOLENCE: PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

BECOME PROACTIVE AGENTS OF PREVENTION RATHER THAN REACTIVE RESPONDERS TO VIOLENCE



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 4 “PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM”

- 4.1 Concepts**
- > PVE, CVE, and counterterrorism are distinct but interconnected approaches used to address violent extremism.
 - > PVE focuses on preventing individuals from becoming involved in extremism by addressing root causes.
 - > CVE targets individuals who may be at risk of radicalization (early intervention) or have already engaged in extremist activities.
 - > Counterterrorism primarily involves responding to violent acts through law enforcement and security/reactive measures.
 - > Effective strategies combine PVE, CVE, and counterterrorism to create a comprehensive response.

- > PVE and CVE emphasize softer approaches like community engagement, education, and dialogue. Prioritizing prevention can reduce the need for more aggressive counterterrorism measures.

4.2 Role of the police

- > Ghana’s laws place the police at the centre of preventing violent extremism by working closely with communities to prevent radicalization, gather intelligence, address grievances, and maintain public safety.
- > The police must effectively integrate law enforcement with proactive, preventive community engagement.

4.1 PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM ARE COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES TO PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN A NON-COERCIVE MANNER

There is a great deal of discussion over the definitions of PVE (preventing violent extremism) and CVE (countering violent extremism). Academics and practitioners alike struggle to come to a consensus on the difference between the two concepts. The following table offers a general overview to help understand the differences and similarities.

CATEGORY	PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE)	COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE)	COUNTERTERRORISM (CT)
Soft vs Hard Power	Softer (non-coercive)	Soft but also hard	Hardest (coercive)
Focus & time horizon	Long term: Drivers and root causes that lead individuals towards VE	Shorter-term: Conjunctural phenomena of VE	Immediate term: Imminent threats to security
Goal	Create environments where extremism is less likely to thrive	Reduce the influence and resources of VE groups	Neutralize imminent threats
Illustrative actions	Prevention programme to address poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunities by investing in communities, promoting education, and fostering dialogue Awareness-raising, dialogue, education, psycho-social, and socio-economic means, and addressing push and pull factors	Producing counter-narratives Working to address vulnerabilities Delegitimizing extremist groups, tactics, and ideologies Mentoring radicalized individuals Offering incentives not to join armed groups	Immediate kinetic, police, or military security countermeasures taken to combat terrorism directly, usually after a violent act has already occurred, ¹¹ such as arrests, killings, and the shutting down of institutions linked to extremism

11 Peter Neumann, *Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Lead to Terrorism: Ideas, Recommendations, and Good Practices from the OSCE Region*, ICSR, 2017, 68 pages.



Target group	Vulnerable individuals who may be leaning towards violent acts or collaborating with VE groups	Individuals who may be leaning towards or have already joined VE groups or may have committed violent acts	Individuals who are members of VE groups and have committed violent acts or are planning on doing so
Limitations	Does not provide immediate physical security	Can put at risk the persons engaged in the efforts of targeting the VE groups' networks and resources	Heavy-handed approaches can create more problems than they solve. These actions can push people towards extremism rather than deterring it
Covered in this manual	Yes	Yes	No

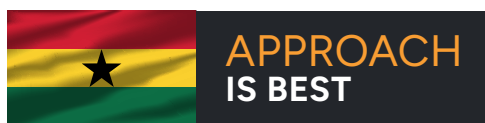
We have chosen to talk about **both PVE and CVE (P/CVE)** in this manual because both types of approaches bring important soft-power strategies into play in the fight against violent extremism.

P/CVE is focused on preventing violent extremism through non-coercive means, using awareness-raising, dialogue, education, psycho-social, and socio-economic means, and by addressing push and pull factors.

While immediate countermeasures are crucial to neutralize imminent threats, **addressing the root causes of violent extremism through prevention programmes** is essential for long-term stability and peace. Prevention should be prioritized as it is less likely to create new enemies or fuel resentment.

The oft-quoted African proverb reminds us that “It takes a village to raise a child”. Similarly, it takes a comprehensive and community-based approach to prevent violent extremism from taking root.

Stakeholders and/or practitioners working on the issue of violent extremism may wish to consider how their initiatives can **leverage** both softer, more driver-focused long-term PVE approaches **and** harder, more phenomenon-focused shorter-term CVE approaches in order to find the most effective method.



This approach is best reflected in the role given in Ghana’s National Strategy to some ministries, like the Ministry of Education; Ministry of Sports and Youth; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Health; Ministry of

Finance and Economy. Their interventions **focus more on preventive and reintegration efforts**. For example, in collaboration with the National Youth Authority,¹² the Ministry of Sports and Youth is developing capacity-building programmes to foster a culture of non-violence, and to counter extremism through education.

12 National Youth Authority Ghana – <https://www.nya.gov.gh/>

4.2 GHANAIAN LAWS FORESEE A PIVOTAL ROLE FOR THE POLICE IN P/CVE

Violent extremism does not occur in isolation. It emerges from social, economic, and political vulnerabilities, often amplified by local grievances and exposure to extremist narratives.

In this context, the Ghana Police Service (GPS) plays a critical role in **identifying early warning signs, addressing local grievances**, and implementing strategies that combine law enforcement with community engagement.

The police thus play a **pivotal role in preventing violent extremism**. Intelligence gathering and analysis are crucial when it comes to **disrupting extremist networks** and preventing attacks. Effective law enforcement also involves **counterterrorism operations** to neutralize violent actors. Furthermore, police officers can contribute to **countering extremist narratives** by promoting tolerance, understanding, and respect for diversity through community engagement and education programmes. The police forces are expected to interact and work more with the community, but it **can be stressful for community members** to be engaged by the police on the issue of P/CVE.



The Ghana Police Service is a central actor in P/CVE, tasked not only with **reacting to criminal activity** but also to **preventing radicalization before violence occurs**. There is a clear commitment by

Ghanaian state structures and civil society to provide solutions to the long-term threat posed by violent extremism. The aim is to develop the skills of the actors who work in this field, to address the underlying drivers of extremism, and to foster strong and inclusive societies, resilient to extremist ideologies.

The role of the police service in Ghana, as defined by the constitution and related laws,¹³ includes the following functions:

- > **Prevent and detect crime**
- > **Apprehend offenders**
- > **Maintain public order**
- > **Ensure safety of persons and properties**



¹³ The mandate of the Police Service is found in the constitution of Ghana (1992) and further guided by laws such as the Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350) and the Police Service regulation 2012 (C.I 76) <https://police.gov.gh/en/index.php/mandate/>



ANNEX 1A – EARLY WARNING INDICATORS CHECKLIST

IDENTIFYING RISKS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AT DISTRICT LEVEL

Purpose

This checklist helps police commanders monitor trends and environments that may increase vulnerability to violent extremism.

IMPORTANT:

Indicators signal **risk**, not guilt or criminal intent.

They should guide **engagement and prevention**, not profiling or repression.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING. CHECK IF PRESENT:

Community climate

- Increased rumours, misinformation, or hate speech between ethnic or religious groups
- Growing mistrust towards the police or government institutions
- Community meetings becoming tense or polarized
- Complaints of discrimination, exclusion, or unfair treatment
- Local leaders reporting growing grievances or frustration

Youth and social dynamics

- Youth groups disengaging from school, work, or community activities
- Night gatherings or closed meetings excluding elders/leaders
- Increased gang formation or vigilante behaviour
- Sudden appearance of external “preachers”, recruiters, or unknown influencers
- Young people expressing “us vs them” narratives or glorifying violence

Security and criminal indicators

- Circulation of small arms or new weapons in the area
- Cross-border suspicious movements or informal crossings
- New sources of illicit financing or informal taxation
- Links between criminal groups and ideological rhetoric
- Unusual purchases of materials that could be used for violence

Online and information environment

- Spread of extremist propaganda via WhatsApp/Facebook groups
- Calls for violence or mobilization
- Rapid spread of fake news triggering tensions
- Local youth sharing violent or extremist content

When several of the above indicators appear:

Commanders should prioritize:

- ✓ dialogue with leaders
- ✓ trust-building patrols
- ✓ mediation
- ✓ youth engagement
- ✓ problem-solving meetings

Remember: Law enforcement measures should remain **proportionate and lawful**.

ANNEX 1B – DISTRICT RISK MAPPING WORKSHEET

UNDERSTANDING VULNERABILITIES AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Purpose

This worksheet helps commanders assess their district systematically and plan preventive action. It should be completed quarterly or during planning meetings.

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY VULNERABLE AREAS

Location/ Community	Main tensions or grievances	At-risk groups	Existing leaders/ partners

STEP 2 – IDENTIFY PUSH FACTORS (STRUCTURAL RISKS)

Tick those present in your district:

- High youth unemployment
- Poverty/lack of services
- Land or chieftaincy disputes
- Farmer–herder conflicts
- Inter-religious tensions
- Poor trust in police
- Border vulnerability
- Displacement/refugee pressure
- Criminal networks
- Other: _____

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY PULL FACTORS (INDIVIDUAL RISKS)

- Identity crisis/marginalization
- Isolation of youth
- Presence of charismatic recruiters
- Financial incentives offered by groups
- Desire for status/belonging
- Exposure to propaganda
- Other: _____

STEP 4 – IDENTIFY PROTECTIVE FACTORS (STRENGTHS)

- Trusted chiefs/traditional leaders
- Active women’s associations
- Youth groups/sports clubs
- Religious cooperation
- CSOs/NGOs
- Strong police-community relations
- Existing mediation mechanisms

Remember: The above (step 4) are the assets that should be mobilized first.



ANNEX 1C – RAPID PREVENTION ACTION GUIDE

WHAT TO DO WHEN EARLY WARNING SIGNS APPEAR

Purpose

This guide provides a simple step-by-step response framework for commanders. Prevention comes first. Enforcement is to be done only when legally required.

STEP 1 – VERIFY

- Gather information from multiple sources
- Speak with chiefs, elders, women leaders, youth representatives
- Avoid rumours or single-source intelligence

STEP 2 – ENGAGE

- Increase foot patrols and dialogue
- Hold community meetings
- Meet trusted intermediaries
- Listen to grievances

Goal: reduce tensions early.

STEP 3 – PREVENT

Depending on the issue, actions include:

- mediation between groups
- youth activities or sports events
- awareness sessions
- conflict resolution meetings
- joint police–community patrols
- support from social services/partners

STEP 4 – MONITOR

- Track changes weekly
- Update risk map
- Document incidents
- Review with team

STEP 5 – STEP UP MEASURES (IF NECESSARY)

In the event of:

- clear incitement to violence
- criminal activity
- weapons
- organized planning

Then apply:

- ✓ lawful investigation
- ✓ targeted enforcement
- ✓ proportional response

Avoid collective punishment or stigmatization.

Remember: Below are the golden principles for commanders!

- ✓ Focus on behaviours, not beliefs
- ✓ Protect rights and dignity
- ✓ Build trust first
- ✓ Engage early
- ✓ Use force only when necessary and lawful



MODULE 2

BUILDING BRIDGES. ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

This module focuses on practical strategies for engaging with community members and establishing meaningful relationships. Users will discover how to identify key individuals, build trust-based partnerships, and create effective communication channels. The emphasis is placed on collaborative efforts to prevent violent extremism and address community concerns. By bridging communication gaps and working closely with local actors, police officers can foster mutual understanding, promote legitimacy, and contribute to safer communities.

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UNIT 5 – UNDERSTANDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY POLICING

LEARN ABOUT THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY POLICING TO EFFECTIVELY BUILD TRUST, FOSTER COLLABORATION, AND ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 5 "UNDERSTANDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY POLICING"

5.1 Nature and goal	> Community policing (CP) is rooted in fostering trust between the police and the public so they can work together to solve local problems and proactively address issues like violent extremism before they escalate.
5.2 Requirements	> Successful CP requires committed leadership, shared goals, clear roles, adequate resources, and open two-way communication.
5.3 Core principles	> CP is built on partnership, accountability, respect for human rights, proactive problem-solving, and active engagement with the community.



5.4 Values and beliefs

- > CP is built on the belief that the police and citizens should work together with honesty and respect, sharing responsibility for safety and recognizing that policing goes beyond enforcement to include problem-solving.

5.5 Strategic and tactical concepts

- > CP emphasizes the shift from reactive responses to crime towards proactive, anticipatory policing. This involves identifying the root causes of crime and social disorder and preventing crime before it occurs.
- > CP means actively engaging the community through meetings, positive daily interactions, interactive patrols, and regular feedback from the public.

5.6 Organizational dimension

- > CP means giving officers some decision-making power so they can focus on serving the community, manage flexibly, and ensure timely and reliable information flows within the organization.

Community Policing (CP) approaches to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) are fundamentally about **earning and sustaining the public's trust**. They aim to empower local officers, particularly at the local level, to **work alongside communities as partners in identifying and addressing the social conditions that can give rise to crime, social disorder, and violent extremism**.

5.1 CP IS A POLICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ADDRESSING CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Over time, community policing has been defined and applied in different ways, making it a difficult concept to pin down. At its core, however, community policing involves community engagement and problem-solving, with an emphasis on **police-community partnerships** to address crime, the fear of crime, physical and social disorder, and neighbourhood decline.

CP combines elements of traditional policing with crime prevention, community engagement, partnership-building, and organizational reform. Community policing is both:

- > a philosophy grounded in **democratic policing and public service**, and
- > an organizational **strategic approach**, requiring appropriate structures, systems, and processes

Rather than replacing law enforcement, it **balances reactive responses with proactive problem-solving**, focusing on the root causes of crime and insecurity.



EVERY CONTEXT IS UNIQUE

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to CP. Each context has its own unique social, cultural, and security dynamics. With this in mind, the Ghana Police Service (GPS)

launched the **Enhanced Visibility and Community Policing Strategy** in August 2022 to “deepen efforts to transform the police, make communities safer, and increase the quality of lives of residents.”¹⁴ The strategy provides a framework for “strengthening police-public collaboration to combat crime”.

¹⁴ “Police Launches CP Strategy to Ensure Safer Communities”: <https://www.gna.org.gh>

5.2 SUCCESSFUL CP REQUIRES COMMITMENT AND A CHANGE IN MINDSET

CP, however, is demanding. It requires sufficient and sustained resources, committed leadership, and the inclusion of marginalized voices (particularly women and young people). **It also requires a shift in mindset: from policing as an instrument of force to policing as a public “service”¹⁵** and from reactive responses to proactive and anticipatory engagement. As primary drivers of this strategy, **district police commanders play a decisive role** in initiating and sustaining such change.

Effective community policing depends on meaningful engagement with communities and partners at all levels. Through joint problem identification and collaborative solutions, the police can create opportunities for participation, set local priorities, and work with community members, civil society organizations, and local authorities to provide protection, reassurance, and prevention.

Research shows that a successful partnership depends on a shared vision and goals about prevention and safety. This might involve identifying and tackling specific problems together. It also requires:

- > clarity when it comes to the purpose and roles of each actor
- > adequate resources for the partnership
- > fluid and open two-way communication

5.3 CORE PRINCIPLES OF CP



Based on Ghana’s policies and policing practice, this translates into the following **core principles of community policing**:

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY

- > **Partnership and Collaboration:** Shared responsibility between the police and the community in maintaining law and order (Ghana Police Service Strategic Plan)¹⁶
- > **Accountability and Transparency:** Police accountability with the communities they serve, reinforced by ethical conduct and oversight (GPS Code of Conduct and Ethics)¹⁷
- > **Respect for Human Rights:** Upholding the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their background (GPS Human Rights Manual)¹⁸
- > **Community Engagement:** Building trust, legitimacy, and regular dialogue with communities (GPS Strategic Plan)

UNDERSTANDING OF POLICE MANDATE

- > **Problem-Oriented Policing (POP):** Identifying and addressing specific, recurring community problems rather than merely reacting to incidents
- > **Proactive Policing:** Anticipating and preventing crime before it occurs (GPS Strategic Plan)
- > **Crime Prevention:** Working with communities to identify risks, crime hotspots, and implement preventive strategies (GPS Strategic Plan)

15 “Good Practices in Building Police–Public Partnerships”, OSCE, SPMU Publication Series, Vol. 4, 2022. https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/4/32547_0.pdf

16 <https://police.gov.gh/en/index.php/community-policing/>

17 GPS Police Handbook, 2010, 61 pages.

18 https://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/police/police_accountability_in_ghana.pdf



While these principles guide community policing nationwide, their implementation varies across different regions and police stations, depending on leadership, resources, and the local context.

5.4 VALUES AND BELIEFS UNDERPINNING CP

A series of values and beliefs underpin CP. These include the following elements:

- > **Citizen Input:** Citizens contribute to police policy and priorities through cooperation, dialogue, and shared responsibility
- > **Broad Functions:** Recognizing that policing extends beyond law enforcement and public order to conflict resolution, victim support (including domestic violence), accident prevention, and reducing the fear of crime, along with traffic duties
- > **Transparency and Ethics:** Integrity, fairness, the respect of rights, and the rejection of arbitrariness and impunity
- > **Partnerships:** Viewing the public as allies in crime prevention and problem-solving

5.5 STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL CONCEPTS

Strategic concepts translate values and beliefs into key operational guidelines. These include:

- > **Re-oriented Operation:** Greater emphasis on face-to-face interaction and visibility, moving beyond purely reactive responses, with officers patrolling areas and responding to calls
- > **Prevention Emphasis:** Crime prevention as a core police responsibility, achieved through cooperation with residents and early intervention. The police registers peoples' complaints and acts upon them by means of preventive talks or police measures
- > **Personalized Service:** Emphasis on respectful, accessible, open, and non-bureaucratic interactions with the public
- > **Geographic Focus:** Assigning officers to defined local areas to strengthen familiarity, trust, and accountability
- > **Community Consultations:** Structured engagement with chiefs, opinion leaders, residents, and police commanders/officers to discuss issues related to crime within the community and overall police policies, priorities, and issues
- > **Problem Solving:** Adopting a problem-solving attitude towards policing. This entails officers looking for the underlying conditions/causes that give rise to incidents and then trying to control or prevent future incidents
- > **Empowerment:** Sense of joint ownership for reciprocal behaviour, skills, and attitudes, which allows members of "communities" and police officers to express their concerns. This implies that there is a need to raise community awareness on the issues affecting community safety
- > **Accountability:** Accountability is gained by creating mechanisms through which patrol and CP officers can be made answerable when it comes to the needs and concerns of communities. This requires the adoption of a flexible management style and total transparency

Tactical concepts translate values and strategies into concrete actions and behaviours. Key elements include:

- > **Town Meetings/Community Forums:** Public meetings intended for the community where they can provide input and seek advice on policies, priorities, and issues. It helps the police to understand local concerns and together coordinate prevention strategies
- > **Positive Interaction:** Replacing negative or confrontational practices and attitudes with positive and respectful engagement that builds familiarity, trust, and confidence on both sides

- > **School-Based Policing:** Engagement with youth and educational institutions to build trust, raise awareness, and prevent radicalization
- > **Interactive Patrols:** Encouraging officers to engage actively with residents rather than merely observing
- > **Opinion Surveys:** Mechanisms like surveys conducted by telephone, mail, newspapers, research, etc. to solicit the views of the community about policing and crime prevention

5.6 ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION

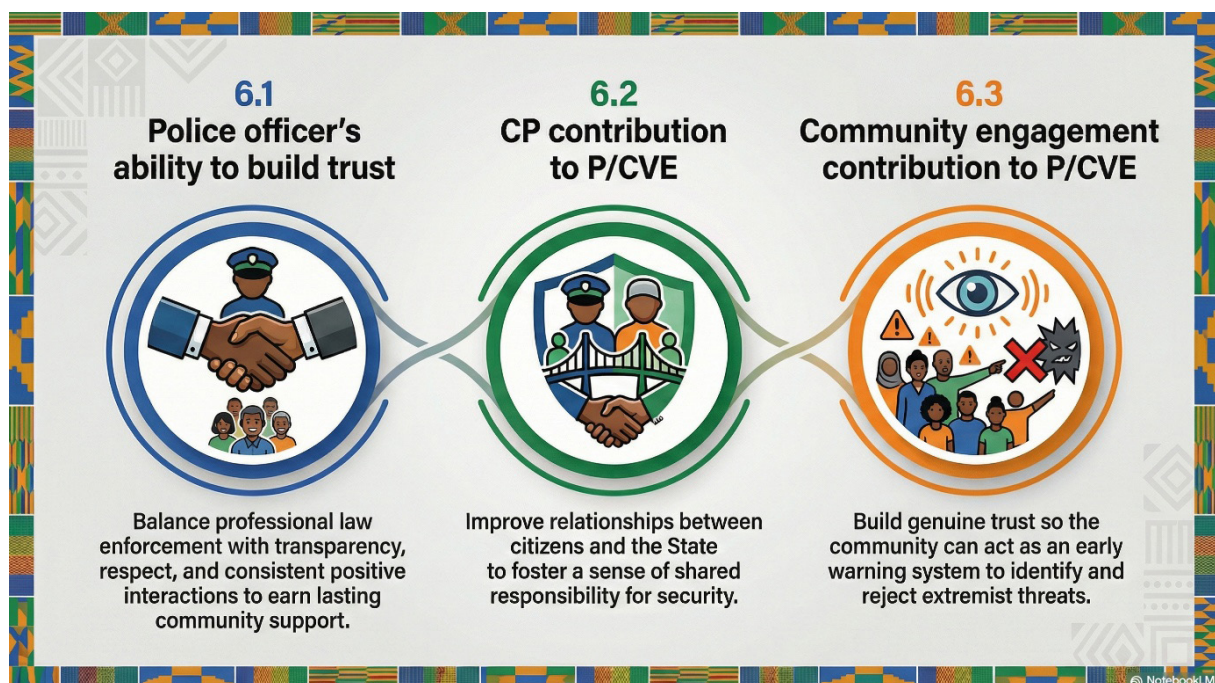
These organizational principles allow for values, strategies, and actions to be translated into institutional, everyday operating procedures. Crucial to the successful implementation are:

- > **Delegation of Authority:** Authority and responsibility can sometimes be delegated to subordinates to allow officers to act more independently and be more responsive
- > **Service Delivery:** Service delivery by the police forces must reflect the concept that the police exist to serve the community and that the various needs of local communities must be considered
- > **Flexible Management:** Management and supervision emphasizing flexible organizational culture and values (proactive) rather than written roles and discipline (reactive and responsive)
- > **Information Flow:** CP practices require a credible, timely, and detailed information flow



UNIT 6 – BUILDING TRUST AND CONTRIBUTING TO P/CVE

FOSTER TRUST AND LEGITIMACY WITHIN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES TO CREATE A FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING AND THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 6 “BUILDING TRUST AND CONTRIBUTING TO P/CVE”

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| 6.1 | Police officer's ability to build trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > To build lasting trust and foster community support, a police officer must balance professional law enforcement with a genuine commitment to community well-being, transparency, respect, and consistent positive interactions. |
| 6.2 | CP contribution to P/CVE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Community policing helps prevent and counter violent extremism by improving the relationship between citizens and State representatives, as well as fostering the sense of a shared responsibility for security. |
| 6.3 | Community engagement contribution to P/CVE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > By building genuine trust, the police can shape the community into a powerful early warning system that rejects extremist ideologies and identifies and addresses potential VE threats. > A lack of trust, shared understanding, and resources can hinder the successful implementation of CP. |

A constructive rapport, based on a foundation of trust, is the driver that underlies and links all of the components of community policing and problem solving. Without trust between police and citizens, effective policing is impossible. In some communities, it will take time and changes in police behaviours to break down barriers of apathy and mistrust so that meaningful partnerships can be forged.

Consolidating the benefits of Community Policing **takes time and continued commitment**. It is **not a silver bullet for PCVE**. Its beneficial impacts remain limited however, if the conditions fuelling violent extremism are not addressed.

6.1 POLICE OFFICERS NEED ABILITY TO BUILD TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY

Building trust is based on an individual police officer’s ability to:

EXECUTE THE POLICE MANDATE	INTERACT WITH THE COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintain the highest standards of professionalism > Develop knowledge of criminals, gangs, and crime hot spots > Address crime problems in areas under their responsibility > Be knowledgeable about cultural norms within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop knowledge of key citizens and assets in the communities > Partner with residents to take care of public disorder situations > Inquire into the well-being of vulnerable persons in the community > Extend courtesy and demonstrate respect > Participate in community activities > Facilitate mediation where appropriate



Building trust depends largely on a police officer’s **interpersonal skills** (effective communication and listening) and **being honest and transparent** when dealing with members of the community. An officer

must maintain a delicate **balance between empathy and law enforcement**, especially during the execution of duties. Mutual respect and trust are built over time between police and residents in the community (whether in urban or rural areas), and trust will result in **common goals** (public safety and social cohesion), as well as effective partnerships and commitment amongst all stakeholders. This statement is supported by the conclusions of a study carried out in the Wa West District of the Upper West Region: *“among the elements that impact community support for CP are the establishment of awareness, trust, and public confidence.”*¹⁹



19 Dery Paul Kaaripoo, “Examining the Impact of Community Policing on Crime and Crime Prevention in Rural Ghana: A Case of Wa West District of the Upper West Region” in UPSA, 2022, 107 pages.



CASE STUDY #6.1: TANZANIA: A BENEFICIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN THE POLICE AND COMMUNITY DESPITE PERSISTING CHALLENGES

Given Tanzania's proximity to Kenya and Somalia, where al-Qaeda, al-Shabab, and other violent extremist groups operate, the spillover of VE into the country is an issue of concern for the authorities. Its CP model, called *ulinzi shirikishi* has proven to be very efficient, but has **mixed results in some regions**.

An assessment carried out in the country in 2019, with a special focus on Zanzibar, to evaluate the contribution of community policing in preventing VE and reducing crime concluded that **CP initiatives and interventions are useful contributors to crime prevention and alleviating local conflicts** (especially land-related ones).²⁰ The study also showed that there is a close relationship between CP and community social welfare. Initiatives by civil society organizations and civilian security patrol groups were more successful than other interventions. Such initiatives promoted **fruitful interaction between police officers and civilians**.

A lack of **shared understanding** between the police and the community as to what constitutes violent extremism, the absence of **clear guidelines**, poor **public advocacy programmes**, the **unpreparedness** of police officers, and **financial constraints** were amongst the main challenges hindering the smooth implementation of CP initiatives. Whereas in many cases the members of the community were ready to cooperate, police officers were not ready to interact with and support the community in crime prevention. Therefore, there was a continued lack of trust between community members and the police.

6.2 CP CAN CONTRIBUTE TO P/CVE

Community policing as a model of community-based public security management could be an appropriate tool/approach not only for crime reduction, but also for addressing the security challenges facing Ghana. Furthermore, CP could provide endogenous, tangible, and sustainable solutions, particularly with respect to preventing and countering violent extremism.

CP can contribute to P/CVE by:

IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZENS AND STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- > Anchoring policing with respect for human rights and the rule of law, thus reinforcing **trust with the population**
- > Improving public perceptions and **interaction with the police** as a prerequisite for effective support in preventing and countering violent extremism
- > Enhancing **police understanding of communities**, as a basis to better engage, serve, and co-operate
- > **Reducing grievances against the State** and public officials, reducing offences, and reducing damage to public property

FOSTERING SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY

- > Improving **communication with the public** about preventing violent extremism
- > Increasing **public vigilance** and resilience against radicalization and violent extremism
- > Helping to identify and **address community safety issues** and grievances
- > Facilitating timely identification and **referral of critical situations**²¹

²⁰ Mussa Ali Mussa, "Assessment of Community Policing as a Crime Reduction Strategy by the Police Force in Tanzania", University of Tanzania, 2019, 271 pages.

²¹ Ibidem.

CASE STUDY #6.2: KENYA: A SHARED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AMONGST NEIGHBOURHOOD LEADERS

One of the most important factors contributing to the success of the CP method in Kenya has been the degree of collaboration amongst stakeholders to generate a **shared sense of responsibility, ownership, and commitment** to the whole community, throughout the programme (the involvement of young people, mixed patrols, open discussions on safety, etc.).²²

The National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC) considers that “it is impossible to solve public safety problems like radicalism and violent extremism without **interactive partnerships between the police and communities**.”²³ In fact, the Centre promotes partnerships between the police and local communities.

The *Nyumba Kumi* (meaning “Ten Houses”) Initiative is one of the programmes developed to tackle criminal behaviour and terrorism. It emphasizes the building of trust between the police and local communities. **Community clusters of ten households** are formed, with a designated leader who acts as the liaison between residents and the police, and monitors security threats. This collaboration has led to **improved communication, crime prevention efforts, and response times**.²⁴

6.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO P/CVE

Community engagement and community policing are **inseparable**. Community policing is one of the approaches that can best capitalize on community contributions. Community policing contributes above all to building a **climate of trust** with communities through dialogue.

In West Africa, community policing is a useful approach to achieving the objectives of PVE, including raising public awareness, gathering intelligence (a collateral outcome but not a set objective of CP), implementing preventive action, and protecting citizens and institutions through community engagement.



22 *Implementing Community Based Policing in Kenya* Report 2008, 36 pages. Available at <https://www.saferworld-global.org/resources/publications/306-implementing-community-based-policing-in-kenya>.

23 <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/war-against-radicalization-violent-extremism-being-won/>

24 Wanaitha Ndonu & al., “Effectiveness of the Nyumba Kumi Community Policing Initiative in Kenya” in *Journal of Sustainability, Environment, and Peace*, 2019, 5 pages – <http://www.jsep.uonbi.ac.ke/>



This strategy can achieve the following results:

BUILD AWARENESS AND RESILIENCE

- > **Raise awareness** of the threat of violent extremism
- > **Confront ideologies** and ideologues who aim to push their agenda on individuals and challenge them
- > Produce narratives that contradict extremist narratives and messages by offering **alternative narratives** or counter-discourses
- > **Build resilience** to violent extremism (strengthening individuals and communities to resist the lure of extremist ideologies)

IDENTIFY EARLY WARNING SIGNS

- > **Identify individuals or groups at risk** in communities and more specifically with key community stakeholders. Communities can act as an **early warning “system”** for police forces if they have information or concerns about individuals or groups
- > **Provide information** that may be useful to authorities, including by preventing individuals from travelling to dangerous conflict areas abroad
- > Provide **support systems** to families, individuals, and communities **where one or more individuals have become radicalized** and have fallen into violent extremism and criminality



Public trust in the Ghanaian police is significantly hampered by fear of reprisals and perceived police inefficiency. A 2021 study highlighted that community members are reluctant to cooperate with

law enforcement due to concerns about their safety and the police’s ability to address crime effectively.²⁵ This **lack of trust** hinders the police’s ability to gather crucial information, solve crimes, and prevent future incidents. Conversely, the successful implementation of community policing could address these issues by fostering open communication, building trust, changing the police’s approach to communities, and by increasing police visibility. A more engaged and supportive community can provide valuable intelligence, thus leading to more effective crime prevention and detection.

25 Gerald Dapaah Gyamfi, “Exploring Public Trust in Policing at a Community in Ghana” in *Security Journal*, vol. 35, 2022, pps. 1249-1262. The study concluded that “lack of public trust in CP resulted from fear of reprisals from criminals reported to the police” and the poor visibility and performance of the police.

UNIT 7 – BRIDGING COMMUNICATION GAPS BETWEEN POLICE AND COMMUNITIES

ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITY MEMBERS, FOSTERING MUTUAL TRUST, UNDERSTANDING, AND COOPERATION

7.1

Relevance and best practice of communication

Communication is a dialogue, not a monologue.



Communication is a two-way dialogue



Feedback manages community expectations & builds mutual safety

7.2

Communication channels

Traditional Channels



Chiefs & Religious Leaders



Town Halls & Forums



Build Local Rapport



Use both traditional methods and modern digital tools to reach every segment of the community effectively.

Modern Channels



Social Media Platforms



Radio & Mobile Apps



Instant & Wide-reaching Contact

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 7 “BRIDGING COMMUNICATION GAPS BETWEEN POLICE AND COMMUNITIES”

<p>7.1 Relevance and best practice in terms of communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Communication in community policing must be a dialogue, not just a monologue. Effective communication involves both sending and receiving messages, with feedback playing a critical role in maintaining open channels of communication. > Communication is essential for managing community expectations and relationships and building the mutual understanding necessary to keep everyone safe.
<p>7.2 Communication channels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Both traditional (e.g., town hall meetings, community forums, chiefs, and religious leaders) and modern (e.g., social media, radio, mobile apps) communication tools should be used to reach different segments of the community in an effective manner.

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7.1 COMMUNICATION IS KEY IN STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS AND REQUIRES FEEDBACK

Effective communication is required within the police and between the police and community members when it comes to passing and receiving information, and to **manage stakeholders' relationships and expectations**. Managing the sometimes-diverse interests and demands of different groups within any community can be **challenging**.

To communicate effectively, different stakeholders must be identified, and their interests considered. It is essential that key concerns are clearly identified, and that those receiving information understand its significance. Effective communication can help coordinate work within the community and **build consensus** on what makes the community safer and more cohesive. Negotiation and mediation in a conflict setting requires particularly good communication skills and the aptitude for dialogue.

Communication **skills are built over time**. To enhance them, apply the tips below through constant practice.

Communication takes many forms:

- > Talking
- > Listening
- > Body language
- > Tone of voice
- > Writing
- > Online sharing of ideas or information

Good communication ensures that two-way communication is maintained through **feedback**. Where there is communication of any kind, there are always those who send a message and those who receive it. Good communication involves **being aware of both sender and receiver**. Feedback in a CP setting must ensure that two-way communication is upheld.

7.2 DIVERSIFYING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS HELPS REACH EVERYONE

The police should share and receive information and feedback across a range of communication channels, equally accessible to all community members.

TRADITIONAL CHANNELS

- > **Traditional policing practice:** Reviving traditional policing methods where officers are embedded in communities, fostering familiarity and trust
- > **Town hall meetings:** Organizing regular meetings privileging open dialogue where concerns are voiced and relationships built
- > **Chiefs and leaders as intermediaries:** Involving respected community figures as liaisons between police and residents.

MODERN CHANNELS

- > **Social media:** Utilizing platforms like Facebook or WhatsApp to share information and announcements, monitor public feeling, and/or gather intelligence for investigations,²⁶ including anonymous reporting can be very effective. There are around 8.8 million social media users in Ghana. The preferred platforms are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter²⁷

26 Ralph, Liam, "Assessing police social media practices through a democratic policing lens" in *Sage Journals*, Volume 25, Issue 3, 2023, 13 pages.

27 <https://www.statista.com/topics/9778/social-media-in-ghana/#topicOverview>

Including traditional authorities in discussions can leverage their influence and community trust. Often, community members are more comfortable sharing sensitive information with their leaders who can then pass it to the police

- > **Radio programmes:** Police-led segments on popular radio stations can allow for wider engagement and can include community service announcements. Hosting interactive radio shows where police answer community questions and residents voice concerns is another approach

- > **Television:** Using TV stations for public service announcements promoting police-community cooperation
- > **Mobile apps:** Developing apps to report crimes anonymously, receive updates on investigations, or provide safety resources. This requires media literacy training for both the police and residents



UNIT 8 – IDENTIFYING AND PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

IDENTIFY KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS, BUILD TRUST-BASED RELATIONSHIPS, AND ESTABLISH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

8.1 Key stakeholders
Partner with traditional authorities (chiefs), media, civil society, and the private sector to build a broad support network.

8.2 Youth
Use digital dialogue and shared activities to turn young people into allies who bridge gaps with marginalized peers.

8.3 Women
Involve women in decision-making and increase female officer presence to handle sensitive security concerns with trust.

8.4 Partnerships
Map your neighborhood and join local groups to identify and solve the specific problems that matter most to citizens.

8.5 Problem-solving approach
Apply the S.A.R.A. Model (Scanning, Analysing, Responding, and Assessing) to ensure a concerted effort on shared problems.

8.6 Risks of CP in PVE
Avoid discrimination or spying; acting fairly and respecting local culture is essential to maintaining community trust.

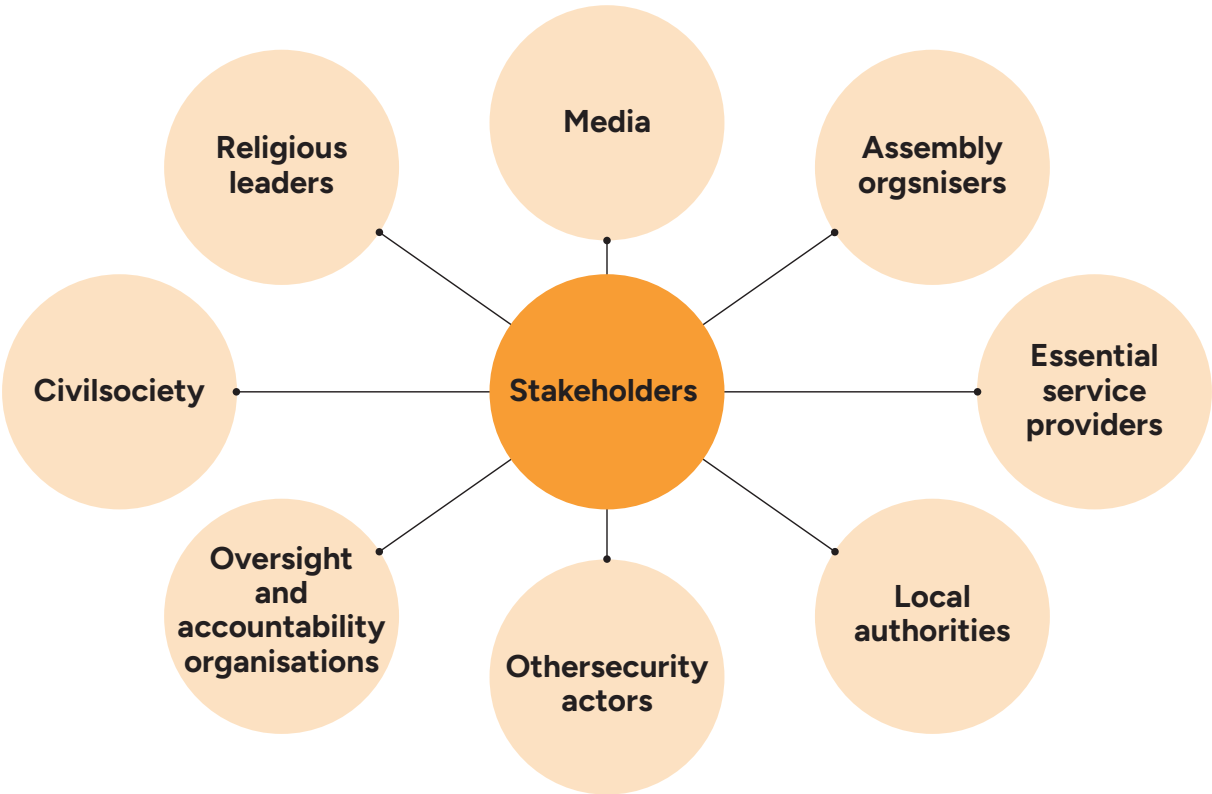
KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 8 “IDENTIFYING AND PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS”

8.1 Key stakeholders	> Key CP stakeholders include traditional authorities (chiefs), community leaders, media actors, civil society organizations, government representatives, and private sector entities.
8.2 Youth	> By actively involving young people in community policing through shared activities and digital dialogue, the police gain vital allies who can bridge the gap to marginalized peers, identify hidden risks, and replace mutual suspicion with shared security.
8.3 Women	> To gain full access to the community and provide security for everyone, the police must actively involve women in decision-making and increase the presence of female officers, ensuring that sensitive security concerns are heard and handled with the specialized trust needed.

8.4 Partnerships	> Police must actively map their neighbourhoods and partner with local groups to identify, prioritize, and solve the specific social and security problems that matter most to the community.
8.5 Problem-solving approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It is important to use a structured process to collaborate and solve the community's specific problem(s). This will ensure that all parties are working on the same problem(s) and sharing resources in a concerted effort. > The SARA Model offers a suitable framework with four steps: Scanning, Analysing, Responding, and Assessing.
8.6 Risks of CP in PVE	> Police officers implementing CP must act fairly, avoid discrimination or spying, respect local cultures, plan carefully, and be prepared for challenges. Their behaviour directly affects community trust and engagement.

8.1 KEY CP STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDE COMMUNITY LEADERS, MEDIA, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

GPS should engage and communicate with a range of stakeholders, including:



Each of the following groups individually affects every aspect of community life. When they work together, they provide the basis for community safety.

- > **Police:** All police units and staff are expected to engage in proactive policing by engaging with communities and partners at all levels to identify crime and safety issues and come up with solutions together
- > **Community:** Essential to the effective implementation of community-based policing and must include women and young people
- > **Government:** Elected or appointed government officials can provide invaluable assistance and support for projects, strategies, and overall community development
- > **Business community:** Private sector businesses provide services and contribute economically to society. Therefore, they have the power to be influential lobby groups
- > **Civil Society Organizations/Non-Governmental Organizations:** The collaboration between police and CSOs and NGOs is pivotal in the success of community policing. CSOs and NGOs play an important role in the community as they provide social services that are complementary to law enforcement initiatives aimed at improving community safety and security. These organizations often have deep roots within communities and understand their specific needs and challenges
- > **Media:** Local media can assist in announcing meetings and educating the public about various safety and security issues. Social media is a very effective tool in terms of engaging young people in crime-fighting efforts
- > **Faith-based organizations and religious leaders:** They represent indispensable partners in community policing as they hold unique positions within communities. They command significant respect and influence, serving as bridges between the GPS and the public. This influence can become a powerful tool in CP efforts to prevent VE. Their moral authority can help mediate conflicts, promote peace, and counter extremist ideologies. By collaborating with these organizations and/or religious leaders, the police can tap into extensive community networks, enhance trust, and effectively address the underlying social issues that contribute to crime and violence

8.2 INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE ALLOWS FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING ABOUT VE RISKS

Involving youth in community policing is crucial in the fight against violent extremism because it allows us to better understand the landscape.

The engagement of young people in CP is recognized as **critical to finding tailored solutions** to security issues facing communities, especially PVE.²⁸ Young people often have a better understanding than security forces of the local issues that fuel grievances amongst their peers, and they are often the most susceptible group for **violent extremist recruitment** and radicalization. Including them in community policing efforts allows them to **identify warning signs** and act as **bridges between their peers** and authorities.

For the police, engaging young people improves their awareness of the needs and problems of different communities. It also offers them opportunities to **redress misperceptions** about the intentions of law enforcement bodies. Sustained youth engagement increases the effectiveness of a citizen-oriented security approach. If the engagement is done with sensitivity and a long-term focus in mind, it can have a **positive impact in traditionally marginalized communities** that harbour grievances against the authorities and security forces.

28 UNDP, "Frontlines: Young People at the Forefront of Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism", 2019, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/frontlines.html>



Useful approaches to help shed light on police actions include:

- > Offering **sporting/cultural activities**
- > Mainstreaming **prevention advice** directed at young people (drug, knife crime, violent extremism, trafficking, etc.)
- > Establishing a **presence on social media** to engage with young people, including dialogue on controversial incidents, and organizing events with them at police headquarters

CASE STUDY #8.2: KENYA: YOUTH-LED INITIATIVE TO EMPOWER CRITICAL VOICES AGAINST RADICALIZATION

The *Youth bila Noma* organization in Kenya has developed **anti-radicalization lessons** aimed at creating awareness on radicalization issues, and how young people can avoid falling into the trap and hands of religious extremists. The objective is to **empower critical voices** in schools and communities who can help in **pushing back the influence** of violent extremism and radicalization within communities.

8.3 PROMOTING A GENDER-INCLUSIVE APPROACH ALLOWS FOR BETTER ACCESS AND TRUST WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Involving women in community policing is crucial in the fight against violent extremism because it allows for enhanced trust and community access. It is important to empower women and **recognize the agency** and power they have within their communities. Nevertheless, women are often reluctant to go to police stations, or at times do not even have the freedom to do so, especially in situations where gender-based violence is perpetrated by family members. Therefore, the objectives of community policing should include the greater promotion and **participation of women in decision-making**, both in terms of community problems and security issues.

Strengthening women's participation also applies to the composition of police teams. **Women police officers are often more approachable** in communities, allowing them to build trust and gather information that might be missed by male officers. This is especially helpful for issues that might be sensitive or uncomfortable to discuss with men.



Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV/GBV) is one of the issues faced by communities, and a systematic involvement of women to collectively identify the root drivers of SGBV (and other problems) is imperative to developing coordinated responses.

While implementing CP programmes and initiatives, the following should be considered to ensure a **gender inclusive approach**:

- > Increase the number of **female police officers** and designate a **gender focal point**, at the local or regional level
- > Institute **mandatory gender training** for all police officers
- > Ensure that women and men have an **equal say in identifying issues** of concern. This ensures that security concerns that are of relevance to women are not deprioritized on the basis that men are less affected
- > When police and communities analyze the causes and solutions to security concerns, it is important to look at **how gender norms might cause or exacerbate** such problems so as to identify effective solutions

Visits could be organized with **women's organizations to local police stations** in the northern regions with the aim of building a relationship of trust with the police. In Nigeria however, this kind of initiative met with mixed reactions: some women found the approach of the police officers too abrupt, thus discouraging others from further engagement with the police.

8.4 PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY ALLOW FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND MORE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS

Community policing is **democracy in action**. Communities must partner with their local police to take part in crime-prevention and intervention activities. The GPS must **build on their ability** to carry out activities in support of policing efforts, so that crime and disorder do not thrive.

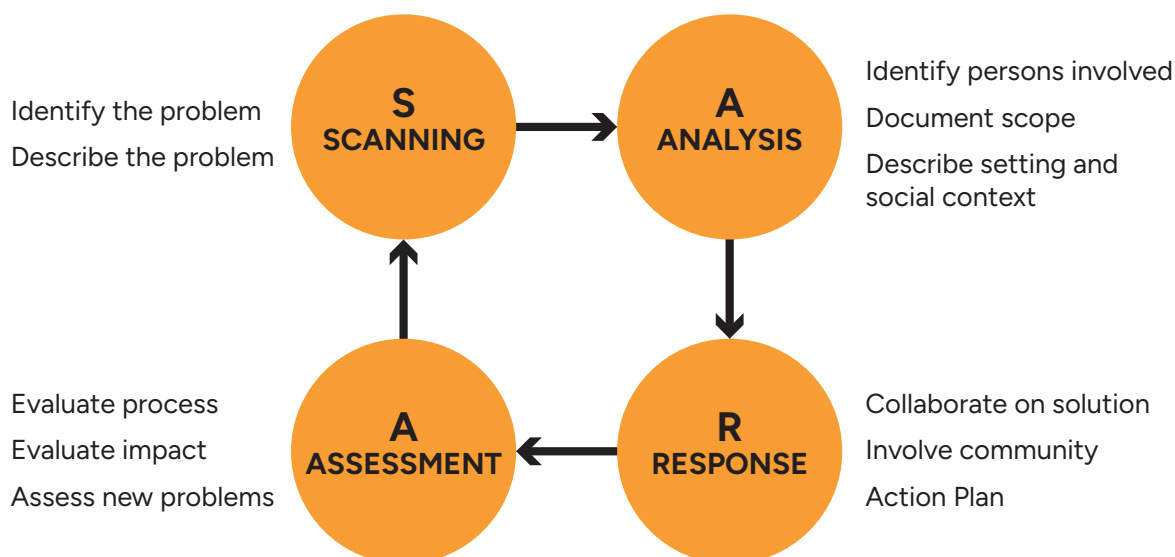
In general, the following steps are involved in the process:

- > **Gathering information:** Achieved through informal conversation with citizens and taking note of the needs of specific communities
- > **Analyze and profile the community for PVE:** One of the duties of police officers is to prepare a profile of the neighbourhood to which he/she is assigned. These profiles should contain information on crime, unemployment, youth at risk, and other social and economic factors that impact the community
- > **Map infrastructure and vulnerable areas:** Area profiling should include a description of the population, roads, community assets, social infrastructure, government agencies and buildings, clubs, locations of residences, health facilities, and places of business, as well as vulnerable and hotspot areas
- > **Identify relevant/important groups in the community:** Commanders should identify the role of each group in the community, based on the services they provide, or could provide, and their contribution to community safety and security
- > **Identify problems, agree on priorities, and implement plans:** Problems may include missing persons, domestic violence, abandoned vehicles, open drunkenness, prostitution, drug selling/use, noise problems at night, illegal vending (shacks), or truancy. As well as the impact on health and safety, these problems may lead to major crimes and social disorder if not addressed

8.5 PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH: THE SARA MODEL

Problems or issues of importance to the community are often discovered by CP or patrol officers closest to the scene. Depending on the seriousness of the issues, CP officers have the discretion to take action or to report it to their supervisors. This is where the SARA (Scanning, Analyzing, Responding, and Assessing) problem-solving approach can be applied.²⁹

SARA MODEL: SCANNING, ANALYZING, RESPONDING, ASSESSING



STEP 1-SCANNING

A problem is not an isolated incident; it is a group of related incidents. Much of the crime, disorder, and fear in communities is concentrated in **specific areas**. Look for patterns of persistent problems in the community and define the **specific problem** rather than looking at it too broadly. The key is to identify the specific problem that is **of concern to the police and the community**. There are many ways to identify crime/problems, including:

- > Community surveys
- > Community meetings
- > Individual conversations with community members
- > Information/data from other agencies
- > Complaints
- > Crime analysis
- > Conversations with supervisors
- > Conversations with investigators and inspectors
- > Information from local government offices
- > Information from the media

STEP 2: ANALYSIS

Analysis is its own skill and is the most difficult and time-consuming step in the problem-solving process. Patterns of incidents require analysis. GPS must **determine the underlying causes** of the problem to solve it. Problems rarely develop quickly; therefore, solutions should not be devised quickly either. There is **no one size fits all solution**. In this phase of problem solving, GPS will need to look at the problem objectively and consider as many factors as possible.

²⁹ <https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/problem-solving-policing>



STEP 3: RESPONSE

When looking at how to respond, GPS must consider the impact of the problem on a specific community. The best solutions are usually those that **combine criminal justice** (e.g., arrest of repeat offenders, increased patrols) and **non-criminal justice** actions (e.g., training/mentorship programmes for youth) focusing on the particular problem. This allows the community to better handle similar crime problems in the future. Solutions should focus on the long-term and consider the **underlying causes** to ensure effectiveness and permanence. Likewise, responses should be generated **in collaboration** with GPS partners.

By working closely with schools, social service agencies, and community groups, the police can develop **long-term solutions** that reduce crime and improve the overall well-being of the community.

The goals of the response are to:

- > Clarify the problem (education)
- > Reduce frequency (reduction)
- > Reduce harm (protection)
- > Eliminate the problem (protection)
- > Eliminate the cause of the problem (prevention)
- > Strengthen partnerships (mobilize the community)

In short, a problem-oriented approach can lead to more **sustainable and effective outcomes**.

STEP 4: ASSESSMENT

Assessments allow the CP officer to determine if the problem-solving effort was successful and to re-think approaches if this was not the case. Assessment should involve the use of **both quantitative and qualitative measures** to determine effectiveness, depending on the problem being addressed. Quantitative measures may include the number of calls, arrests, etc. Qualitative measures look at other factors, such as whether there has been a reduction in related crimes, an improvement in community conditions, increased public satisfaction with police response, or a reduced fear of crime.

The GPS must gather the **input of the community members**, through feedback, to accurately assess the effectiveness of the services provided.

Benefits of a structured problem-solving approach

While it is not compulsory to use the SARA model for solving crime and quality-of-life problems, it is important to **use a structured process to collaborate and solve the community's specific problem**. This will ensure that all parties are working from the same page and pooling resources in a concerted effort. There are numerous benefits to this problem-solving approach, such as:

- > Clearer understanding of the causes of community problems
- > Better working relationships with community partners
- > Better use of community resources
- > Reduction in demand for police services
- > Increased public satisfaction with police services
- > Better understanding of the community's perspective on the police service offered
- > Develops and maintains trust within the community

8.6 MITIGATING RISKS FOR CP FOR P/CVE: STIGMATIZATION, SPYING, AND IGNORANCE OF LOCAL CULTURE

The police services in charge of implementing community policing are the first contact between the government and its citizens. Their attitudes and behaviour within the specific context of violent extremism will impact the success levels of community engagement and are one of the foundational principles of community policing.

Therefore, they must pay particular attention to the following risks:

- > **Avoid stigmatization and the selective engagement of certain groups or communities** as this can be counterproductive. Engagement must not be discriminatory and should be based on in-depth and objective analyses
- > **Avoid using community policing to simply spy on communities or groups.** It should not be a cover for special operations by law enforcement at risk of losing the trust and support of communities
- > **Consider the socio-cultural context and realities.** The concept of community policing covers a range of practices that come under different approaches and philosophies. It would be unrealistic to believe that any security approach is universal. Problem solving is done with a given community, based on its culture, ideas, behaviours, and way of reacting which may differ significantly from one community to another. If these are not taken into account, the outcome may be failure

The following should also be taken into consideration when implementing CP:

- > Community policing requires **extensive planning and preparation** by the police, as well as training of police officers
- > Officers deployed to work in the community are required to **perform several functions**
- > Despite good intentions and efforts, **not all CP projects succeed.** If a CP-based PVE project fails, the public will **blame the police**
- > A **certain amount of opposition to implementing PVE-based CP** should be anticipated both from the community and the police



ANNEX 2A – COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER MAPPING TOOL

IDENTIFYING WHO MATTERS IN YOUR DISTRICT

Purpose

Effective community policing depends on working with the right people. This tool helps commanders identify:

- > influencers
- > trusted actors
- > vulnerable groups
- > potential partners

The map below should be completed at the start of the assignment and updated quarterly.

Stakeholder Map

Stakeholder group	Influence (Low/Med/High)	Trust in Police (Low/Med/High)	Key contact	Engagement strategy	Frequency
Chiefs/ traditional leaders					
Religious leaders					
Women’s associations					
Youth groups					
Schools/ teachers					
CSOs/NGOs					
Local government					
Market associations					
Private sector					
Media					

Commander guidelines:

Prioritize:

- ✓ High influence + Low trust → urgent engagement
- ✓ High trust + High influence → strategic allies

Avoid:

- ✗ engaging only the elite
- ✗ ignoring women or youth voices

ANNEX 2B – MONTHLY COMMUNITY POLICING ROUTINE

MINIMUM PREVENTIVE ACTIONS FOR EACH DISTRICT

Purpose

Community policing must be systematic, not occasional. This checklist is tailored for a monthly routine (minimum).

MONTHLY ACTION PLAN

Engagement

- 1 community forum or town hall meeting
- 1 meeting with chiefs/traditional leaders
- 1 meeting with religious leaders
- 1 women's group consultation
- 1 youth-focused activity (sports/dialogue/school visit)

Visibility & presence

- Weekly foot or bicycle patrols engaging dialogue
- School visits
- Market visits
- Informal conversations with residents

Prevention

- Identify at least 1 local problem to address
- Conduct 1 mediation or problem-solving meeting
- Follow up on previous grievances

Monitoring

- Update stakeholder map
- Review early warning indicators
- Brief team

Remember: Consistency builds trust more than large one-off events!



ANNEX 2C – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TEMPLATE

PREPARING STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

Purpose

This template has been developed to help commanders organize activities professionally and to ensure follow-up.

Activity Plan

Issue/problem	Objective	Stakeholders involved	Action	Date	Responsible officer	Follow-up

Example

| Youth tensions at night | Build trust & dialogue | youth leaders, imam, women rep | football + discussion | 15 May | CP officer | review after 2 weeks |

Reminder

Every engagement must lead to:

- ✓ feedback
- ✓ commitments
- ✓ follow-up

Remember: Without these, trust decreases.

ANNEX 2D – POLICE BEHAVIOUR GUIDE

EVERYDAY CONDUCT THAT BUILDS (OR DESTROYS) TRUST

Purpose

Small daily behaviours on behalf of the police forces can have a large impact on legitimacy. This guide supports officers during patrols and interactions.

DO

- ✓ greet respectfully
- ✓ listen first
- ✓ explain actions and decisions
- ✓ involve local leaders
- ✓ treat everyone equally
- ✓ follow through on promises
- ✓ remain calm under provocation

DON'T

- ✗ threaten or intimidate unnecessarily
- ✗ humiliate people publicly
- ✗ use force when dialogue is possible
- ✗ stereotype youth or minorities
- ✗ make promises you cannot keep
- ✗ ignore complaints

Remember: Every interaction either builds or erodes trust. There is no neutral behaviour.



ANNEX 2E – COMMUNITY TRUST & PERCEPTION SURVEY

MEASURING WHETHER COMMUNITY POLICING IS WORKING

Purpose

This survey is intended to provide police commanders with evidence that trust is improving. It should be conducted every 6 months with 30–50 residents. It is important to ask simple questions only.

Quick Survey (Yes / No / Don't know)

1. Do you trust the police in this district?
2. Do officers treat people respectfully?
3. Would you report suspicious activity to the police?
4. Do you feel safer than 6 months ago?
5. Do the police listen to community concerns?
6. Are women and young people included in discussions?

Open question

What should the police improve?

Use results to:

- ✓ adapt strategy
- ✓ prioritize engagement
- ✓ report progress
- ✓ build accountability

Remember: Progress matters more than perfect scores.

ANNEX 2F – PROBLEM-SOLVING (SARA) WORKSHEET

STRUCTURED APPROACH TO RECURRING PROBLEMS

Purpose

This worksheet is intended to encourage proactive policing rather than simply reacting to incidents.

S – Scan

What is the problem?
Where? Who is affected? How often?

A – Analyse

Why does it happen?
Root causes? Stakeholders? Risks?

R – Respond

What actions will address causes (not only symptoms)?
Who needs to be involved?

A – Assess

Did it work?
What changed? What should be adjusted?

PLANNING TABLE

Problem	Causes	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Result



MODULE 3

SHIFTING PARADIGMS: BECOMING A COMMUNITY PROBLEM-SOLVER

Develop the skills and mindset necessary to identify, analyze, and address the root causes of community issues, rather than merely treating symptoms. This module guides police officers through various key stages: adopting problem-solving approaches, fostering collaboration with community members, and implementing sustainable actions that contribute to safer, more resilient neighbourhoods. Participants will learn how to assess whether interventions have worked, and how to continually refine strategies for a lasting positive impact.

UNIT 9 – COMMUNICATING TO BUILD TRUST **65**

Learn to develop a community-oriented mindset and cultivate a police force known for empathy, cultural competence, and active listening skills

UNIT 10 – MEDIATION: A CORNERSTONE OF COMMUNITY POLICING **68**

Learn to deepen police commanders' appreciation of the core values behind mediation as a method for resolving conflicts/disputes and learn how to manage a mediation process

ANNEXES **73**

Annex 3A – Trust-Building Communication Script

Annex 3B – Active Listening Checklist

Annex 3C – Basic Mediation Guide

Annex 3D – Mediation Script

Annex 3E – Scenario-Based Training Exercises


Annex 3F – Officer Self-Reflection Tool

UNIT 9 – COMMUNICATING TO BUILD TRUST

DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-ORIENTED MINDSET, AND CULTIVATE A POLICE FORCE KNOWN FOR EMPATHY, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, AND ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS IN ORDER TO BUILD TRUST AND FOSTER POSITIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Communicating to Build Trust: A Guide for Community Policing

9.1 Attitude and Behavior



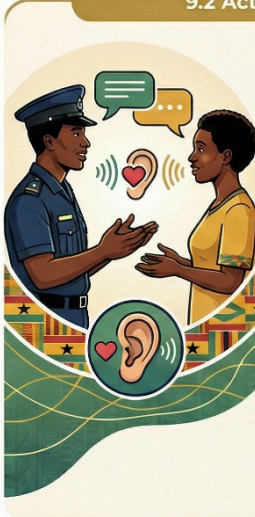
Your Presentation Matters
Your attitude and behavior directly influence how the community perceives and treats you.

Positive body language
Calm, respectful
Tone
Facial expressions

Master Non-Verbal Cues
Use positive body language, facial expressions, and tone to improve every interaction.

Emotional Management
Always remain calm and composed, even when facing challenging or provocative situations.

9.2 Active listening



Listen to Understand
Use active listening to respond effectively, which builds essential trust with citizens.


Lead with Empathy
Treat every person with dignity and compassion to foster a positive relationship.

NotebookLM

Community policing benefits from strong communication: Effective communication is crucial when it comes to building trust, resolving conflicts, and fostering collaboration.


KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 9 “COMMUNICATING TO BUILD TRUST”

9.1 Attitude & behaviour



- > **Attitude and behaviour are interconnected:** How officers present themselves influences how they are perceived and treated by the community.
- > **Non-verbal communication is crucial:** Body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice can significantly impact interactions.
- > **Emotional management is key:** Officers must remain calm and composed in challenging situations.

9.2 Active listening



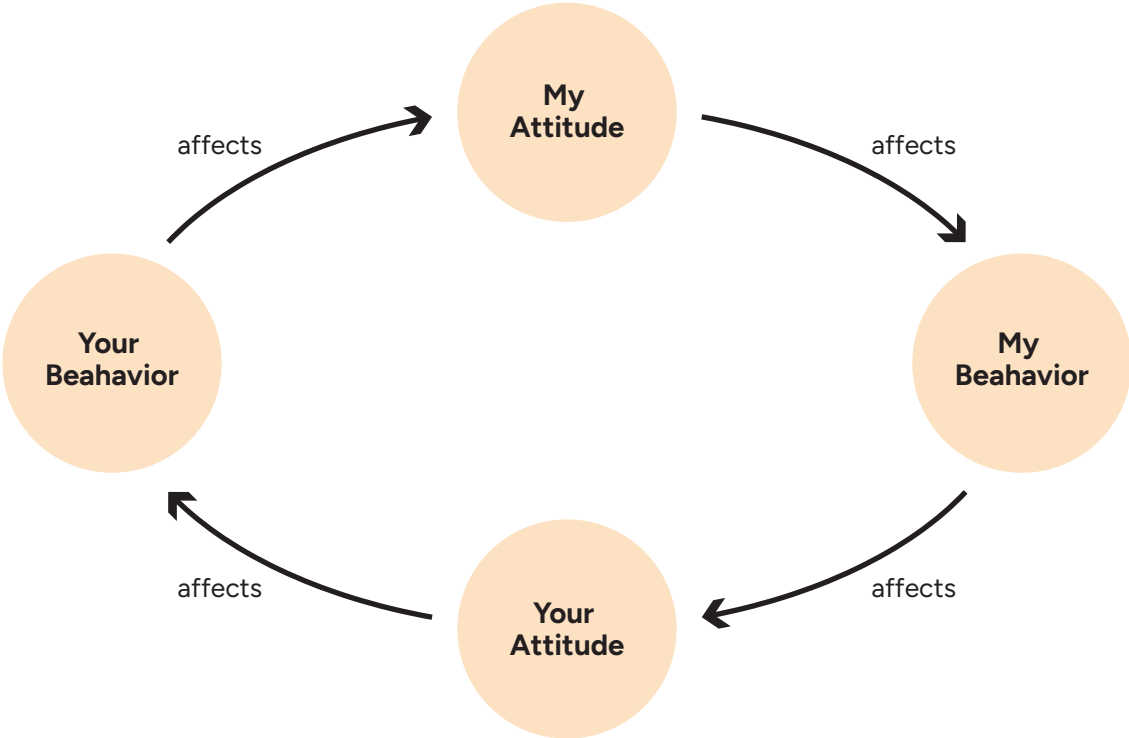
- > **Active listening is essential:** Understanding and responding to others effectively builds trust and facilitates communication.
- > **Empathy and respect are fundamental:** Treating people with dignity and compassion fosters positive relationships.



9.1 HOW VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOUR IMPACTS THE REACTIONS OF YOUR COUNTERPART

Police officers deal with conflict daily and **many situations can be handled without using physical force**. To manage conflict well, an officer must stay calm, think clearly, and **control his or her emotions and behaviour**, even under stress.

One helpful CP tool is the **Betari Box**. This is a simple model that explains how **attitude affects behaviour, and how that behaviour affects the ways in which others respond to us**.






The above image describes the cycle of attitude and response that we create. We express our attitudes through non-verbal conduct (smiling or frowning) and verbal conduct (what we say, the words we use, and our tone of voice).

This affects others’ behaviour towards us. The **most important information** exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often wordless, **communicated non-verbally**. Non-verbal communication is conveyed by emotionally driven facial expressions, posture, gesture, pace, tone, and intensity of voice. A well-known rule of 55/38/7 suggests that **55% of communication is through body language, 38% through tone of voice, and only 7% through the words spoken**.

The **example you set on or off duty** is just as important as the words you speak. Being aware of that is the first step in changing how others perceive us, and in this case, how community members perceive the police force.

9.2 HOW ACTIVE LISTENING BY THE POLICE MAKES PEOPLE FEEL MORE AT EASE TO SHARE INFORMATION

If people do not feel listened to by the police, they will stop sharing information. When they feel that the police officer they talk to conveys interest, engagement, and caring towards them, they will feel heard and understood and eventually communicate more openly. Making a person feel comfortable in this way is called active listening. To practice active listening, police officers can adopt the following approach:

	BEHAVIOURAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL
			
Good practice	Treat people with dignity and respect . Convey interest and comprehension verbally and non-verbally	Pay attention to all the information , both explicit and implicit, that you are receiving from the other person, making sure to comprehend and integrate that information	Stay calm and compassionate during the conversation, including managing any emotional reactions (annoyance, boredom) you might experience ³⁰
Practical advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Be attentive > Don't interrupt > Use appropriate eye contact > Nod your head > Use "fillers" like "mm", "I'm listening", or "yes" to indicate that you are listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Summarize what the speaker says by restating facts, feelings, and needs > Use phrases such as "What I hear you saying is...." 	

Active listening is even more important when CP actions involve negotiation and mediation activities.

30 Amanda Jane Davies & Karl Anton Roberts, "Communications in Policing" in *Policing in practice*, chap. 4, Palgrave, 2011, pps. 1-19.



UNIT 10 – MEDIATION: A CORNERSTONE OF COMMUNITY POLICING

APPRECIATE THE CORE VALUES AND METHODS BEHIND MEDIATION AS A WAY TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS/DISPUTES PEACEFULLY

Mediation: A Vital Tool for Community Policing in Ghana

A core community policing tool for peaceful conflict resolution, trust-building, and violence prevention.

10.1 Mediation for CP



Peaceful resolution tool that builds trust and collaborates with traditional community leaders.

10.2 Skill set



EMPATHY ACTIVE LISTENING IMPARTIALITY EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

10.3 Enabling factors



Success relies on early detection and adapting the process to the local cultural context.

10.4 Mediation process



1. Detect
Identify conflict early.



2. Set the Stage
Identify and prepare the setting.



3. Rule-Setting
Clarify the rules of engagement.



4. Listening
Listen to each perspective.



5. Understanding
Ensure mutual comprehension.



6. Solving
Develop solutions together.



7. Agreement
Conclude with a formal agreement.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 10 “MEDIATION: A CORNERSTONE OF COMMUNITY POLICING”

10.1 Mediation for CP



- > Mediation is a **valuable tool for police officers**. It can help resolve conflicts peacefully, build trust within the community, and prevent violence from escalating.
- > Mediation aligns with **community policing principles**. It promotes dialogue, problem-solving, and trust-building.
- > Police mediation should work **in conjunction with existing conflict resolution mechanisms** within the community and collaborate with traditional leaders.

10.2 Skill set

- > Police officers should master the following **skills** to conduct mediation processes successfully: empathy, active listening, impartiality, problem-solving, and effective communication.

10.3 Enabling factors

> The chances of succeeding in mediation efforts can be enhanced by a set of **enabling factors**: acceptance of the mediation process by the community, early detection of the conflict, adaptation of the mediation process to the cultural context, and a good knowledge of the community's needs.

10.4 Mediation process

> The **mediation process** typically follows 7 main steps: 1) Detect the conflict, 2) identify the setting for mediation, 3) clarify the rules of the process, 4) listen to each perspective, 5) ensure a mutual understanding, 6) develop solutions, and 7) conclude with an agreement.

10.1 MEDIATION STRENGTHENS CP BUT DOES NOT REPLACE LAW ENFORCEMENT OR EXISTING MEDIATION BY COMMUNITY ACTORS

DEFINITION

Mediation is an intervention in a conflict or dispute. It is a **structured and voluntary process** involving a **neutral third party**, often a trained mediator, who facilitates communication between conflicting parties to reach a **mutually agreeable settlement**.

In the context of community policing and police missions, mediation can be a **powerful tool for conflict resolution**, preventing escalation, and fostering community harmony. It is a voluntary process that empowers parties to **find their own solution**. Police officers must actively listen, understand underlying issues, and **guide parties towards a "win-win" outcome**. Mediation can be conducted in various settings, from courtrooms to community centres. Many community members find mediation empowering and highly satisfactory because it promotes **effective community participation**. It is also less time consuming and involves little or no cost.



MEDIATION A VALUABLE TOOL

Mediation is a valuable tool for police officers in the Northern Region of Ghana, given its diverse communities and potential for conflict. Mediation **aligns directly with the core principles of CP** (dialogue, problem-solving, building trust), and contributes to addressing conflicts at their root, preventing escalation, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility. However, it is **not a substitute for law enforcement, where necessary**. Furthermore, in Ghana, traditional leaders like chiefs and community elders play a significant role in conflict resolution. **Police mediation should complement, but not replace, these existing practices and structures.**

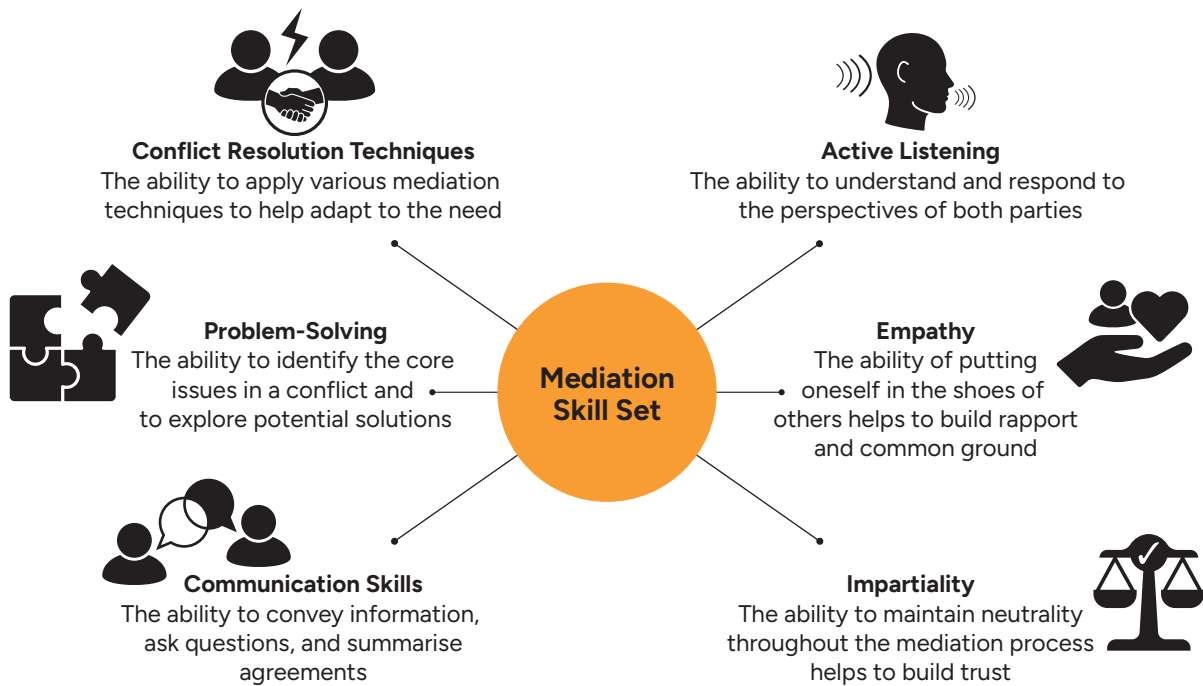
EXAMPLE

A neighbourhood dispute escalates into verbal abuse. A community policing officer, trained in mediation, intervenes. By creating a **safe space** and actively listening to both parties, the officer **helps them understand each other's perspectives**. Through guided negotiation, they agree on a cooling-off period and establish ground rules for future interactions. This prevents the situation from escalating into violence and strengthens community relations.



10.2 MEDIATION REQUIRES POLICE OFFICERS TO MASTER A SPECIFIC SKILL SET

Police officers must promote mediation as a conflict resolution strategy within the police force and the community. Therefore, police forces should ensure that officers in their districts are equipped with the **necessary skills** to mediate conflict effectively. Officers need to be able to identify potential conflicts, de-escalate tensions, and facilitate constructive dialogue between all parties.



10.3 COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE AND EARLY DETECTION OF CONFLICTS ENABLE MEDIATION SUCCESS

The chances of success in mediation efforts can be enhanced by a set of enabling factors which have at their core the central idea of CP: the integration of police officers into the social context.



10.4 THE STEPS OF A SUCCESSFUL MEDIATION PROCESS

To successfully mediate a dispute, police officers should follow these steps:

- 1) **Recognize a conflict situation within the community:** Once a conflict is identified, it is essential to assess its nature and suitability for mediation, the scale, and potential impact on the community
- 2) **Identify the place and the participants with the conflicting parties:** Before mediation begins, the mediator helps the parties decide where they should meet (a neutral and safe environment) and who should be present. Each side might have lawyers, co-workers, and/or family members on their side, depending on the context
- 3) **Start by introducing the goal, the process, and the ground rules :** With the parties gathered in the same room, the mediator introduces the participants, presents the goal (e.g. to find common ground and restore peace within the community), outlines the mediation process, and lays out the ground rules. It is important to pay special attention to this stage because first impressions are key. It is a confidential process, so no records should be made. This allows both citizens and police officers to speak freely
- 4) **Invite each party to present its views and feelings:** The mediator clearly describes the conflict. Each side can present its view of the dispute without interruption (active listening). In addition to describing the issues they believe are at stake, they may also take time to vent their feelings
- 5) **Help participants understand each other:** The mediator and the disputants are free to ask questions with the goal of arriving at a better understanding of each party's needs and concerns. As disputing sides often have difficulty listening to each other, mediators should act like interpreters, repeating back what they have heard and asking for clarification when necessary. If parties reach an impasse, the mediators need to diagnose the obstacles that lie in the path to resolution and work to get the discussion back on track
- 6) **Allow private space for free expression:** If emotions run high during a joint session, the mediator might split the two sides into separate rooms for a private meeting. The mediator should inform each side that the information they share in privacy will remain confidential. This may lead them to be more transparent about the real root cause of the problem
- 7) **Develop proposals acceptable to all:** At this point in the process, it is time to begin formulating ideas and proposals that meet each party's core interests. The mediator can lead the negotiation and facilitate the dialogue with all parties in the same room, or can engage in "shuttle diplomacy", moving back and forth between the teams, gathering ideas, proposals, and counterproposals
- 8) **Conclude the agreement:** The mediation should conclude with the mediator once again restating and clarifying the terms of the resolution. At a later date, the mediator should follow-up to ensure the agreement is being upheld



EXERCISE: MEDIATING A LAND DISPUTE

A longstanding land dispute has escalated into violent confrontations between two farming communities in a rural district. Both communities claim ownership of a fertile piece of land that is essential for their livelihoods. The conflict has deepened existing social divisions and mistrust between the two communities. Tensions have grown (in a context of widespread anxiety over the lack of rainfall) resulting in property damage, injuries, and threats of violence. As the police commander, you have been called in to de-escalate the situation and prevent further clashes, including the potential loss of lives.

What are your immediate priorities as a police commander in this situation?

What challenges might arise during the mediation process?

What are the goals of the mediation process?

What outcomes would indicate a successful process?



ANNEX 3A – TRUST-BUILDING COMMUNICATION SCRIPT

HOW TO START CONVERSATIONS THAT REDUCE TENSION

Purpose

First contact often determines whether a situation escalates or de-escalates. This script helps officers adopt a calm, respectful, prevention-oriented approach.

STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

1. Introduce yourself

“Good afternoon. I am Officer [Name] from the district police. We are here to understand your concerns and work together on solutions.”

2. Clarify purpose

“We are not here to arrest anyone. We want to listen and prevent problems before they grow.”

3. Ask open questions

- > “What is happening here?”
- > “What concerns you most?”
- > “How is this affecting your community?”
- > “What solutions do you suggest?”

4. Show active listening

- > Summarize what you have heard

“So, you’re saying the main issue is...”

- > Acknowledge emotions

“I understand this is frustrating.”

5. Close with commitment

“Thank you for sharing this. We will follow up with you by [date].”

Avoid saying

- X “Calm down”
- X “This is not our problem”
- X “You must obey”
- X “If you don’t cooperate, we will arrest you”

Statements like the above escalate tensions and diminish trust.



ANNEX 3B – ACTIVE LISTENING CHECKLIST

QUICK SELF-CHECK DURING INTERACTIONS

Purpose

This checklist is designed to help officers assess whether they are truly listening or merely reacting.

Before leaving a meeting, you should ask yourself:

- Did I let the person speak without interruption?
- Did I ask open-ended questions?
- Did I avoid judging or blaming language?
- Did I summarize what I heard?
- Did I explain police actions clearly?
- Did we agree on the next steps?

If several boxes are unchecked → trust may not have been built.

ANNEX 3C – BASIC MEDIATION GUIDE

STEP-BY-STEP CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Purpose

This guide provides a simple structure for resolving disputes before they escalate. The police should act as neutral facilitators, not judges.

STEP 1 – PREPARE

- > choose a neutral location
- > ensure safety
- > identify key stakeholders
- > set ground rules

STEP 2 – SEPARATE LISTENING

Meet each side separately:

- > hear their story
- > identify interests (not only demands)
- > clarify expectations

Sample questions:

- > “What happened from your perspective?”
- > “What would a fair solution look like?”

STEP 3 – JOINT DIALOGUE

Bring parties together:

- > establish respectful behaviour
- > allow equal speaking time
- > focus on issues, not personalities

Officer’s role:

- ✓ facilitate
- ✓ clarify
- ✓ calm tensions
- ✗ do not take sides

STEP 4 – IDENTIFY COMMON GROUND

Examples:

- > safety
- > access to land
- > avoiding violence
- > maintaining relationships



STEP 5 – AGREE ON SMALL COMMITMENTS

Start small:

- ✓ meeting times
- ✓ shared boundaries
- ✓ communication channels

Avoid unrealistic promises.

STEP 6 – FOLLOW-UP

- > revisit within 7–14 days
- > check compliance by conflicting parties
- > adjust if necessary

Remember: Without follow-up, agreements fail.

ANNEX 3D – MEDIATION SCRIPT

PRACTICAL PHRASES OFFICERS CAN USE

Purpose

The phrases below allow officers to practice communication and mediation skills in realistic situations.

Opening

“We are here to find a solution together, not to blame anyone.”

Ground rules

“Each person will speak without interruption.”

“We will focus on solutions.”

De-escalation

“Let’s slow down so everyone can be heard.”

“I understand emotions are strong. That’s why we’re here.”

Reframing

Instead of:

X “They are stealing our land”

Use:

✓ “You are concerned about access to land and fairness”

Closing

“What we agreed today is...”

“We will meet again on [date] to review progress.”



ANNEX 3E – SCENARIO-BASED TRAINING EXERCISES

FOR CLASSROOM OR TEAM TRAINING

Purpose

The exercises below should be used to practice communication and mediation skills in realistic situations.

SCENARIO 1 – YOUTHS GATHERING AT NIGHT

A group of young men gather nightly near the market. There are no crimes yet, but residents are worried.

Task:

- > approach without intimidation
- > conduct dialogue
- > identify concerns
- > agree on next steps

Debrief:

- > Did officers listen?
- > Did they escalate or calm the situation?
- > What could have been improved?

SCENARIO 2 – FARMER–HERDER DISPUTE

Two groups accuse each other of destroying crops.

Task:

- > mediate
- > identify shared interests
- > prevent violence

Debrief:

- > Was neutrality maintained?
- > Was a practical agreement reached?

SCENARIO 3 – RELIGIOUS TENSION RUMOURS

False information spreading online about an attack.

Task:

- > engage leaders
- > prevent panic
- > communicate transparently

Debrief:

- > How was trust built?
- > How was misinformation addressed?

ANNEX 3F – OFFICER SELF-REFLECTION TOOL

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP AND LEGITIMACY

Purpose

The tool below should be used after difficult interactions, encouraging officers to reflect on the following:

QUESTION	NOTES
Did I remain calm?	
Did I treat everyone with respect?	
Did I explain my decisions?	
Did the community feel heard?	
What would I do differently next time?	

Remember: Continuous self-assessment and improvement builds professionalism.



MODULE 4

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

This module equips participants with a toolkit of proactive approaches to prevent violent extremism. Drawing on the latest research and case studies, it guides learners through the process of transforming early warning indicators into actionable intelligence, identifying and countering extremist narratives and propaganda, upholding human rights and ethical standards in all interventions, and measuring the impact of community policing initiatives. By linking all these components, Module 4 empowers professionals to engage communities, anticipate potential threats, and implement evidence-based strategies that build resilience and foster trust, all the while ensuring accountability and respect for fundamental rights.

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Learn how to transform early warning indicators into actionable intelligence	
UNIT 12 – COUNTERING EXTREMIST PROPAGANDA	85
Learn how to identify and counter extremist narratives and propaganda	
UNIT 13 – ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ETHICAL CONCERNS	88
Learn how to uphold human rights principles and ensure accountability	
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Annex 4G – Commander Decision Checklist	

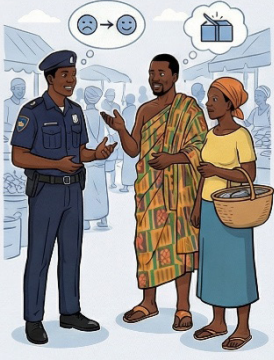
UNIT 11 – FROM EARLY WARNING INDICATORS TO INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

TRANSFORM EARLY WARNING INDICATORS INTO ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE

11.1 Indicators

Spot early warning signs through trust.


Use local knowledge to identify behavioral changes, but remember that no single indicator confirms a threat.



11.2 Reporting

Protect sources and report safely.

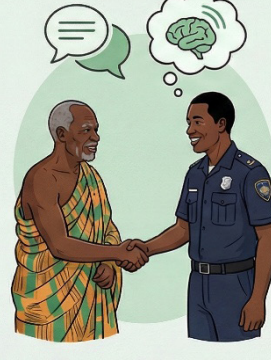
Reporting must be clear, proportionate, and strictly protect the identity of those providing information.



11.3 Intelligence

Intelligence is a by-product of engagement.

Focus on building ethical, rights-based relationships; actionable intelligence will follow naturally.




11.4 Cooperation


Combine local trust with strategic analysis.

Community policing provides the bottom-up trust that fuels strategic intelligence-led policing.

Strategic Intelligence-Led Policing: Analysis




Community Policing: Bottom-Up Trust



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KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 11 “FROM EARLY WARNING INDICATORS TO INTELLIGENCE GATHERING”

11.1 Indicators



- > CP plays a critical role in **identifying early warning signs** through trust-based relationships, routine engagement, and local knowledge.
- > Early warning indicators of violent extremism can be behavioural, social, ideological, or conflict-related, but **no single indicator is sufficient on its own** to confirm radicalization or intent to use violence.

11.2 Reporting



- > **Reporting, referral, and response mechanisms must be clear**, proportionate, gender-sensitive, and compliant with human rights standards, with particular attention to **protecting the source** and community safety.



11.3 Intelligence



> **Intelligence gathering should never be the primary objective** of CP; rather actionable intelligence is a *by-product* of effective, ethical, and rights-based community engagement.

11.4 Cooperation



> **Intelligence-led policing and CP are complementary approaches:** one relies on strategic analysis and management, the other on local trust and bottom-up information flow.

11.1 LOOKING FOR INDICATORS OF SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Community policing plays a critical role in **identifying early warning signs** for suspicious behaviour through trust-based relationships, routine engagement, and local knowledge.

However, **no single indicator is sufficient on its own** to confirm violent extremism. Possible indicators include:

<p>IDEAS & RELIGION</p>	<p>TENSIONS WITH OTHERS</p>	<p>VIOLENCE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Rejection of orthodox religious practices > Calls for the introduction of religion-based law > Radical statements through social media, video, rejecting/criticizing rival religions > Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Altered appearance, and/or social isolation³¹ > Existence and escalation of local grievances or conflictual situations > Fusion of local grievances and global dynamics > Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Manifestations of heightened levels of violence³² > Attempts to acquire weapons or explosives > Other

11.2 REPORTING MECHANISMS ON SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR REQUIRES CAUTION

By the Police: Police officers should have the capacity to refer individuals who are suspected, or at risk of heading down a path towards violent extremism. Institutionalized **referral mechanisms** to engage with individuals suspected of violent extremism must have clearly defined safeguards such as compliance with gender-equality standards and **human rights**, while allowing for the effective enforcement of the law.

Using **non-criminal interventions**, when appropriate, strengthens the communities' relationship with local police. Sometimes, the involvement of the police may be counterproductive. It is crucial

31 See *Preventing Violent Extremism in Ghana* guide, developed by the Ministry of National Security, 2022, 30 pages.

32 Olawale Ismail & 'Funmi Olonisakin, "Why do youth participate in violence in Africa? A review of evidence", 2021, *Conflict, Security & Development*, V. 21, Issue 3, pps. 371-399.

that the competent local/public authorities be informed and mobilized for joint and proactive intervention/problem-solving.

By the community to the police: The GPS should be clear with community members about all the possible outcomes when people share information with them and ensure that their **rights are protected**. Therefore, careful planning is required.

Strong measures must be taken to ensure that citizens, groups, or communities are **not exposed to retaliation** by individuals and/or non-state armed groups that identify them as collaborating with the police. Indeed, many members of community structures and citizens **pay a steep price**, even with their lives, for such collaboration. They are frequently the target of attacks by violent extremist groups.³³

11.3 INTELLIGENCE GATHERING IS NOT A GOAL BUT A BY-PRODUCT

Interaction between the police and citizens in the context of community policing may generate an **important source of information and intelligence** that can guide the actions of law enforcement at both local and national levels. This applies particularly in respect to the prevention of violent extremism. **However, it is worth remembering that intelligence gathering is not the main objective of community policing. It is instead the result of properly implemented community policing.**



11.4 INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING AND CP ARE COMPLEMENTARY

“Intelligence-led policing (ILP) is crime fighting that is guided by effective intelligence gathering and analysis.” (OSCE, 2017, p. 19)

Though it is proactive in nature like CP, ILP facilitates the reduction of crimes, disruption and prevention through strategic and tactical management, deployment, and enforcement.

“ILP and CP are complementary and mutually supportive approaches that still have some distinct characteristics with regard to their orientation, hierarchical focus, and decision-making actors.” (OSCE, 2017, p. 89). These areas are described in the table below:

TABLE – COMPARISON OF CP AND ILP

	COMMUNITY POLICING 	INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING 
Orientation?	Local communities	Criminal groups, prolific and serious offenders, counterterrorism
Hierarchical focus?	Bottom-up	Top-down

³³ In Burkina Faso, local and religious leaders, voluntary civil defence committees and members of Koglweogo associations (Local Security Initiatives) have been killed by violent extremist groups.



Who determines priorities?	Community concerns/demands	Policymakers and police management from criminal intelligence analyses
Mutual benefits of collaboration	CP could facilitate the sharing and dissemination of information relevant to the group or community	ILP can help CP better identify and prioritize local security challenges by providing basic information about a given individual or group
Expected benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Increased police effectiveness based on improved information flow > Increased community safety and security resulting in greater public satisfaction > Increased trust and collaboration between state services 	

Source: OSCE (OSCE Guidebook, *Intelligence-Led Policing*, 2017, page 89).

UNIT 12 – COUNTERING EXTREMIST PROPAGANDA



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 12 “COUNTERING EXTREMIST PROPAGANDA”

12.1 Propaganda



- > Violent extremist propaganda is designed to **exploit grievances, simplify complex realities, and legitimize violence** through an “us vs. them” outlook.
- > This propaganda does not rely only on ideology; it also appeals to emotions like **fear, anger, humiliation**, and the **desire for belonging and recognition**.
- > Social media and **digital platforms significantly accelerate** the spread of violent extremist propaganda, particularly amongst frustrated individuals and youth.

12.2 Empower stakeholders



- > Countering extremist narratives is most effective when the police work **in partnership with communities**, religious leaders, civil society, educators, and media actors.
- > **Media literacy** and critical thinking are essential protective factors that help communities resist manipulation, disinformation, and extremist messages.

12.3 Counter propaganda






- > Police responses to extremist narratives must **prioritize prevention, trust, and community engagement**, rather than surveillance or repression alone.
- > Law enforcement measures against propaganda must always **respect human rights, freedom of expression, and remain proportionate**.



12.1 VIOLENT EXTREMIST PROPAGANDA: “JOIN US, THE GOOD, TO FIGHT THE BAD USING VIOLENCE”

Violent extremist narratives share some common characteristics that exploit grievances, current political and social events, and manipulate people towards violence. Here are some of the key features:

<p>“AGAINST THE BAD”</p> 	<p>“BE ONE OF US”</p> 	<p>“VIOLENCE IS OK”</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Us vs. Them Mentality: They create a strong distinction between an in-group (the “us”) and an out-group (the “them”). The out-group is typically vilified, blamed for problems, and seen as a threat that needs to be eliminated > Black and White Thinking: They offer a simplistic view of the world, with clear heroes and villains. Complex issues are reduced to easy-to-understand narratives that justify violence > Blame Game: They assign blame for problems on the out-group, often portraying them as responsible for the in-group’s suffering. This can be based on ethnicity, religion, nationality, or ideology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Sense of Belonging: They offer a sense of belonging and purpose to those who feel isolated, marginalized, or powerless. They prey on feelings of disenfranchisement and offer a community that promises acceptance and validation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Justification of Violence: They promote violence as a legitimate and even necessary response to perceived injustices. Violence is seen as a way to achieve a utopian future or defend the in-group from existential threats > Glory and Martyrdom: They glorify violence and portray perpetrators of violence as heroes or martyrs. They may use violence to establish dominance or spread fear > Distorted Ideologies: They manipulate existing ideologies, such as religious teachings or political philosophies, to justify violence. They take passages out of context or misinterpret them entirely to fit their agenda

These violent extremist narratives are often spread through social media, online forums, and extremist publications. Social media and digital platforms significantly accelerate their circulation. They can be very persuasive, especially to those who are feeling vulnerable or disenfranchised.

12.2 EMPOWER STAKEHOLDERS TO IDENTIFY AND CHALLENGE VIOLENT EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

CONTENT: PROMOTE COUNTERNARRATIVES AND MEDIA LITERACY



TARGET GROUPS: THE PUBLIC, COMMUNITIES, AND SCHOOLS



Promoting Counternarratives: Police forces can partner with religious leaders, CSOs, and social media influencers to develop and disseminate counternarratives that challenge extremist ideologies. These counternarratives can highlight the negative consequences of violent extremism and promote peace, tolerance, and social cohesion

Media Literacy Training: Police can conduct media literacy training programmes in schools and communities to equip citizens with the skills to critically evaluate the information they encounter online and offline. This will help them to identify extremist propaganda and disinformation

Educational Initiatives: These programmes should be designed to foster understanding, tolerance, and critical thinking amongst community members. For instance, implementing peace education programmes (with a focus on cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity) in schools, and equipping young people with the skills needed to counter violent extremism

Outside schools, **Community-Based Education Programmes** can empower residents to identify and challenge extremist narratives. These initiatives can include workshops on community policing, violent extremism, media literacy, critical thinking, and human rights

Public Awareness Campaigns: Police forces can launch public awareness campaigns to warn citizens about the dangers of violent extremism and VE propaganda. These campaigns can be disseminated through traditional media, social media, and community outreach programmes

12.3 BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS TO COUNTER PROPAGANDA

Engaging with Communities: Police can build trust and rapport with local communities by engaging in regular dialogue and outreach programmes. This will allow them to understand the grievances and concerns that make communities vulnerable to violent extremist propaganda.

Monitoring Social Media: Police can establish social media monitoring units to track extremist activity online. This will allow them to identify extremist groups, their propaganda channels, and potential recruits.

Partnering with Tech Companies: Law enforcement can collaborate with social media companies to flag and remove extremist content from their platforms. They can also work with these companies to develop strategies to prevent the spread of extremist propaganda online.

Regional Cooperation: Police forces in West African countries already share information and best practices for countering violent extremism (through the Accra Initiative). This allows them to develop a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to threats.



UNIT 13 – ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ETHICAL CONCERNS

UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES WHILE EFFECTIVELY LEADING POLICE UNITS, FOSTER PUBLIC TRUST, AND ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT





13.1 Good governance
Foster public trust and citizen participation through transparency, accountability, and respect for the rule of law.



13.2 Ethics
Act with integrity, justice, and fairness to remain credible and respectable in the eyes of the population.





13.3 Human Rights
Fulfill your responsibility to respect every person in our diverse community to maintain strong relations.



13.4 Benefits
Upholding rights builds the trust and cooperation needed to prevent and solve crimes more effectively.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 13 “ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ETHICAL CONCERNS”

<p>13.1 Good governance</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Effective community policing thrives on mutual trust, transparency, and accountability within the framework of good governance. > The respect for the rule of law is essential when it comes to fostering public trust and encouraging citizen participation in security matters, including the prevention of violent extremism.
<p>13.2 Ethics</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Police officers need to be firmly rooted in professional ethics and conduct, guided by key values like integrity, justice, and fairness, which will make them credible and respectable in the eyes of the population. > Lack of ethical behaviour can create the breeding ground for violent extremist groups.

13.3 Human rights



- > Police must keep in mind, at all times, that it is their **responsibility to ensure that human rights are respected**.
- > Respecting human rights in community policing means building and maintaining **good relations with the community** and **respecting every person** in a diverse community.

13.4 Benefits

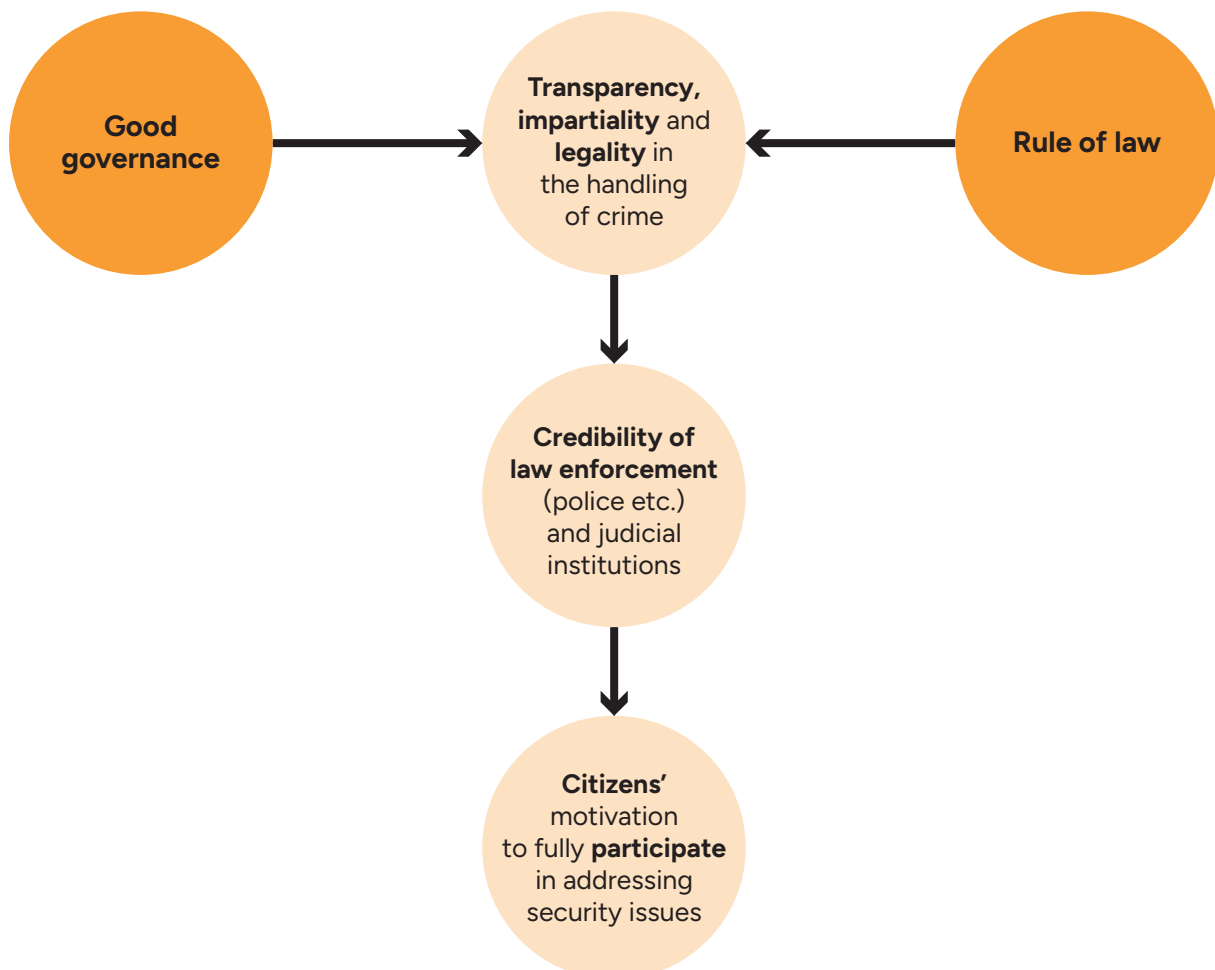


- > Protecting human rights is not just an ethical and legal **requirement** but also a **practical** one. When police uphold human rights, public trust is built, community cooperation is enhanced, and **law enforcement can work more effectively** to prevent and solve crimes.

13.1 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW ARE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL CP

The goal of community policing is to serve the community and to ensure the protection of its members and their property. Effective and efficient community policing is rooted in **mutual trust** and a solid partnership with the population, and the achievement of these objectives is conditioned by factors both at the government level and the ethics within the police services.

The successful implementation of community policing is not exempt from the implementation of **good governance** and the **respect of the rule of law**. These are the **key elements** that makes community policing successful and effective.



The credibility of the police/law enforcement bodies and judicial institutions depends on effective law enforcement and combating impunity. It is essential for citizens to perceive maximum **transparency, impartiality, and legality in the handling of crimes.**

Their motivation to fully participate in addressing security issues in general and countering violent extremism is at stake. **Civic participation is a logical consequence** of the systematic application of democracy, the rule of law, and good governance. Without these prerequisites, community policing cannot be successful.

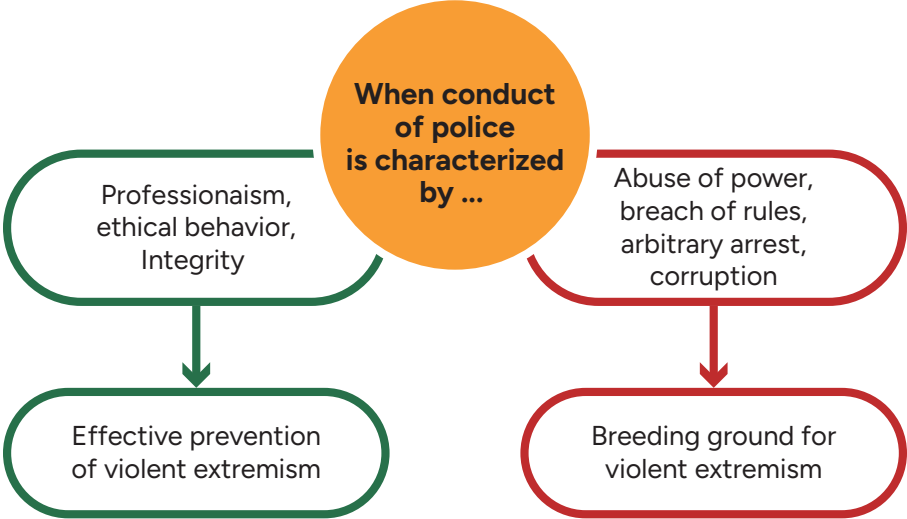
CASE STUDY #13.1: BAD GOVERNANCE AS A ROUTE TO EXTREMISM

A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study, based on over 500 interviews with jihadists – mostly Kenyans, Nigerians, and Somalis – found that in more than 70% of cases, the trigger for enlisting was a “government act”, such as the arrest or execution of a relative.³⁴

13.2 LACK OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND ETHICS CREATES A BREEDING GROUND FOR VE

Much of the community approach to policing is based on issues relating to the behaviour of law enforcement bodies. **Professional conduct** and **ethics** are essential conditions for the effectiveness of security services in the field. It would be unrealistic to hope for a rapprochement with the population and the establishment of partnerships without certain ethical and moral values being upheld.

CP requires that police officers fully respect professional ethics and conduct. This will make them **credible** and **respectable** in the eyes of the population. For this, they must reinforce certain key values such as **integrity, justice, and fairness**, as well as professionalism and openness to behavioural change and reform.³⁵



The image of the security services, tarnished by various abuses and breaches of police ethics, can compromise the successful implementation of community policing. The law enforcement officer must strive to associate availability with **exemplary personal behaviour**. What is important here is not only respect for others and for differences, but also honesty and integrity.

34 <https://feature.undp.org/interrupting-the-journey-to-extremism/>

35 In some West African countries, law enforcement bodies are the most reluctant stakeholder when it comes to the implementation of community policing.

The police services in West Africa have the unfortunate reputation of being unreliable and violent. Furthermore, they are often identified as being responsible for cases of torture, arbitrary arrest, corruption, lack of professionalism, etc. Such cases can create a **breeding ground** (loss of trust, sense of injustice, lack of accountability if police brutality goes unpunished, etc.) **for violent extremist groups**.

CASE STUDY #13.2: WHEN THE POLICE ARE MORE FEARED THAN VIOLENT EXTREMISTS DUE TO UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

In Nigeria, the now-disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (involved in extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, and extortion) contributed to fuelling resentment, particularly amongst young Nigerians. Some who felt they had nowhere to turn and no way to achieve justice through the legal system may have become **more susceptible to extremist ideologies promising a violent path to change**.³⁶

In that context, conventional **law enforcement (if involving brutality) eventually became more feared than violent extremist groups**. This situation is detrimental to community policing and community engagement initiatives.

13.3 UPHOLDING CONSTITUTIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS IS INTEGRAL TO COMMUNITY POLICING

Human rights can be defined as follows. Human rights are universal legal guarantees protecting individuals and groups against actions by governments that interfere with fundamental freedoms and human dignity. Human rights are not connected to religion. Every human has the same rights, regardless of their religion or lack thereof.³⁷

REFERENCE: HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA (1992)



Chapter 005 – 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992) provides for the protection of human rights and freedoms:

“12. (1) The **fundamental human rights** and freedoms enshrined in this Chapter shall be **respected and upheld** by the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary, and all other organs of government and its agencies, and are applicable to them, **by all natural and legal persons** in Ghana, and shall be enforceable by the Courts as provided for in this Constitution.”

“(2) **Every person in Ghana**, whatever their race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed, or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this Chapter but subject to **respect for the rights and freedoms of others** and for the public interest.”

36 <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/nigerias-endsars-protests-also-concern-counterterrorism>

37 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>



HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES AND COMMUNITY POLICING:

MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY



- > **Establish a partnership** between police and law-abiding members of the community
- > Establish **community outreach** and public information programmes
- > Build contacts with the community through **non-enforcement activities**
- > **Involve the community** in identifying and solving problems and concerns
- > **Assign officers to a permanent neighbourhood beat**
- > **Coordinate** policies, strategies, and activities with other government agencies, and with CSOs

RESPECT EVERY PERSON



- > **Recruit from all sectors** of the community
- > Train officers to deal with **diversity**
- > **Liaise regularly with all groups** in the community

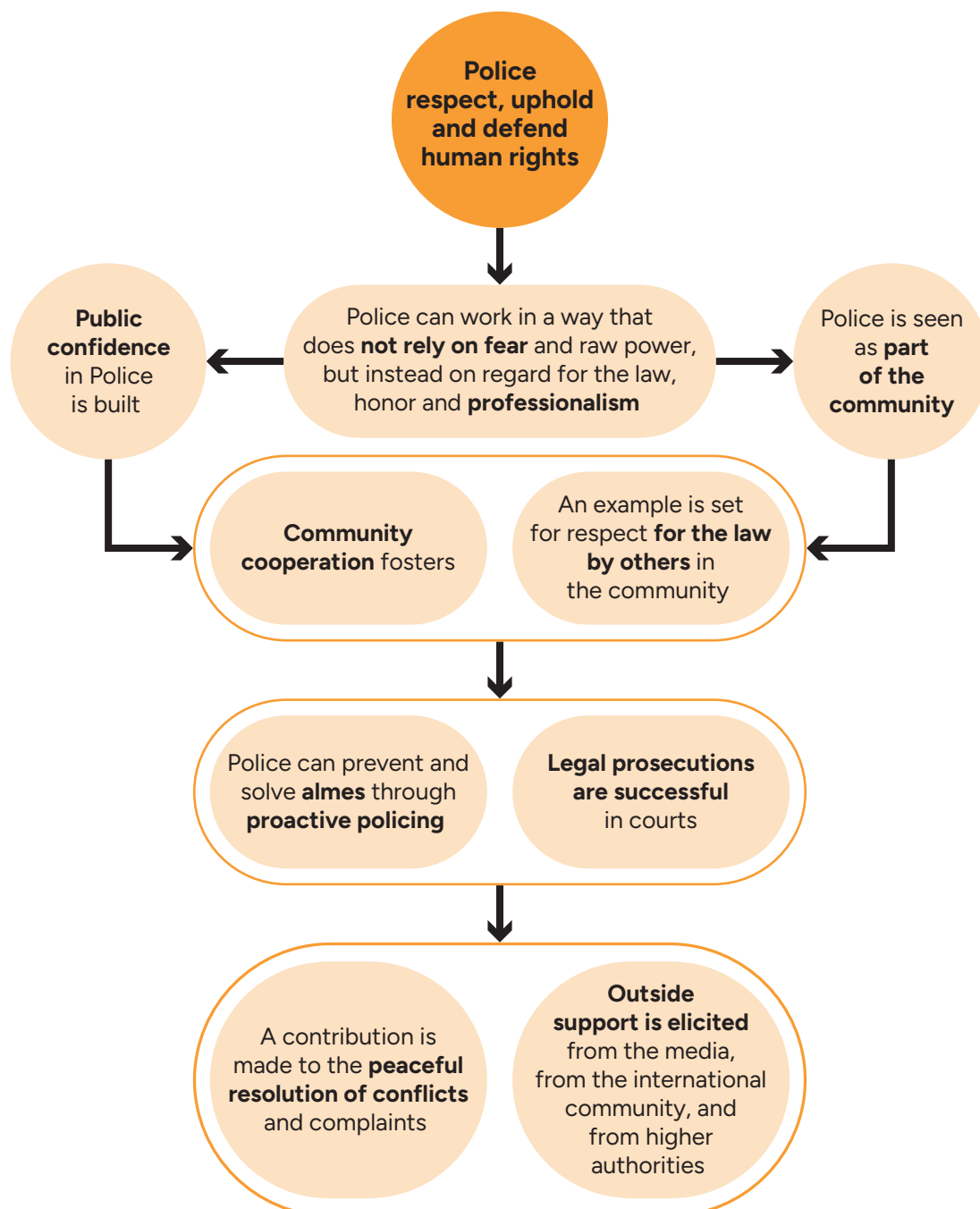


Police officers might find it difficult, in some circumstances, to uphold these fundamental principles, and to find the right balance between sanctions and procedures. However, they must keep in mind that it is their **responsibility to ensure that human rights are respected.**



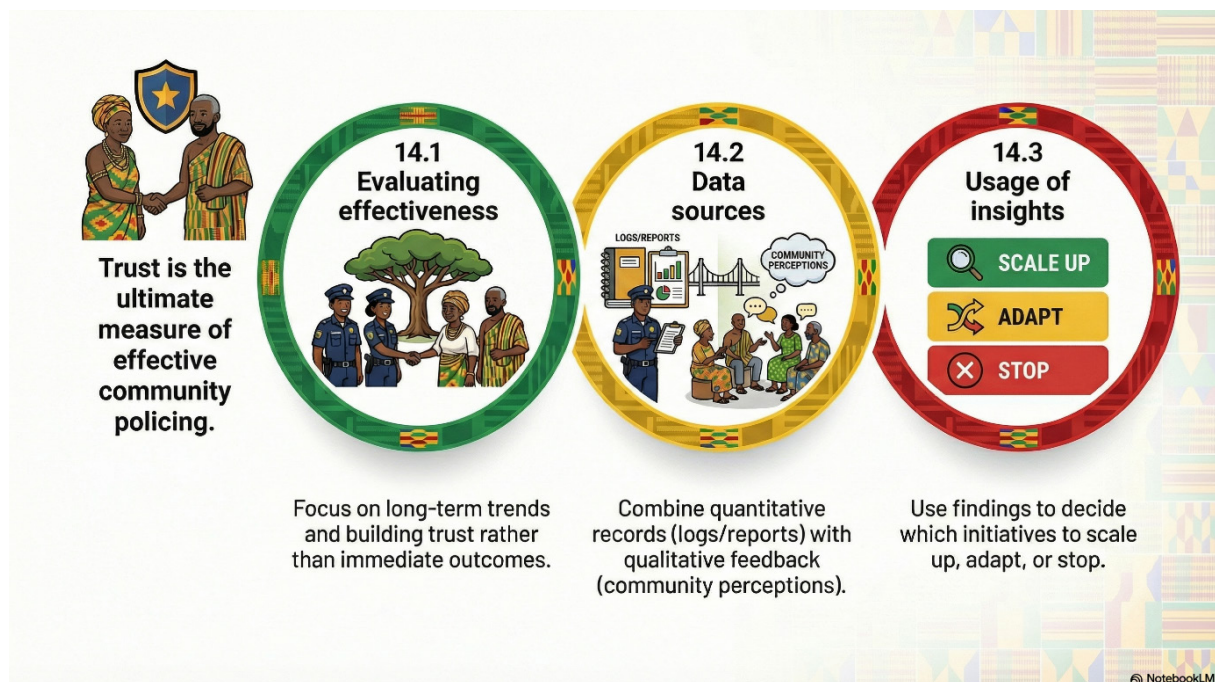
13.4 UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS ENHANCES THE PRACTICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF CP

An effective police service is one that serves as the **first line of defence in the protection of human rights**. Respect for human rights by the police, in addition to being a moral, legal, and ethical imperative, is a requirement of law enforcement that actually **enhances effectiveness**. When the police are seen to respect, uphold, and defend human rights, the following occurs. See chart below:



UNIT 14 – MEASURING AND EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CP INITIATIVES

MEASURE AND EVALUATE COMMUNITY POLICING INITIATIVES BY IMPLEMENTING DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING TO ENSURE A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN PUBLIC SAFETY



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UNIT 14 “MEASURING AND EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CP INITIATIVES”

14.1 Evaluating effectiveness



- > Measuring the effectiveness of community policing initiatives is essential for **accountability, learning, and continuous improvement.**
- > The impact of community policing on violent extremism is often indirect and long-term; evaluation should therefore focus on **trends and patterns**, rather than immediate outcomes.
- > **Trust between the police and the community** is a key indicator of effective community policing and a critical protective factor against violent extremism.

14.2 Data sources



- > **Quantitative data** (such as training records, engagement logs, and reporting trends) should be combined with **qualitative data** (such as community perceptions and feedback) to provide a balanced assessment.

14.3 Use of insights



- > Evaluation should **inform decision-making**, including which initiatives to maintain, adapt, scale up, or discontinue.
- > **Community participation** in evaluation processes strengthens transparency, legitimacy, and shared ownership of safety and VE prevention efforts.

14.1 CP EFFECTIVENESS CAN BE MEASURED THROUGH CERTAIN INDICATORS

The evaluation allows the police and the community to understand which programmes and strategies are most effectively fulfilling community policing goals and how the police should **direct its resources going forwards**. What new initiatives and activities should the police undertake, maintain, improve, or cancel?

A perfect measurement of effectiveness/impact of CP on violent extremism is difficult, but some methods can provide valuable insights on:

- > **Community trust:** Surveys or focus groups to gauge the extent to which residents trust the police
- > **Incident reporting:** Track reports of suspicious activity or potential radicalization flagged by community members
- > **Arrests:** Monitor arrests linked to violent extremism plots
- > **Community engagement:** Collect data and measure participation in community events and meetings co-hosted by the police

It doesn't go without **challenges**:

Indirect impact: Community policing builds trust, which can make it harder for violent extremism to flourish, but this effect is hard to measure directly.

Long-term effects: Preventing violent extremism takes time, so short-term data may not be conclusive.

14.2 SURVEYS AND ACTIVITY LOGS – RELEVANT SOURCES OF DATA

An important step is to ensure whether CP has been effective and the goals realized. Data sources capable of monitoring CP progress in terms of objectives include:

- > **Training Data:** Involves tracking all training taken by police personnel. Training sessions offered to the community and training provided by the community to GPS personnel. The data should include the demographics of participants and the specific CP topics covered
- > **Community Engagement Log:** Collect data on community meetings and events using the data collection template. Examples include recording the participation of women, issues raised by the community, and the level of officer involvement in community meetings and events



- **Surveys:** Periodic surveys to measure whether the police are providing fair and impartial treatment to all residents and to identify gaps in services
- **Community Policing Survey:** Can gauge the public's level of satisfaction with the police

14.3 EVALUATION INSIGHTS AND DECISION-MAKING

Evaluation should inform future decision-making, including which initiatives to **maintain, adapt, scale up, or discontinue**.

Community participation in evaluation processes strengthens transparency, legitimacy, and shared ownership of safety and prevention efforts.



ANNEX 4A – EARLY WARNING RESPONSE PROTOCOL

WHAT TO DO WHEN RISKS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM EMERGE

Purpose

This protocol provides commanders with a structured decision-making process when early warning signs appear. Early action prevents escalation.

STEP 1 – VERIFY INFORMATION

- ✓ Collect information from multiple sources
- ✓ Consult community leaders and trusted partners
- ✓ Distinguish rumours from confirmed facts

Avoid:

- ✗ acting on single-source information
- ✗ public accusations without evidence

STEP 2 – ASSESS RISK LEVEL

Risk Level	Indicators	Immediate Action
Low	rumours, tensions	dialogue & monitoring
Medium	mobilization, threats	engagement + prevention activities
High	weapons, planning violence	investigation + targeted intervention

STEP 3 – ENGAGE COMMUNITY

- > Meet chiefs, religious leaders, women, and youth representatives
- > Organize dialogue forums
- > Increase visible, friendly patrols
- > Communicate transparently

Goal: reduce fear and misinformation

STEP 4 – IMPLEMENT PREVENTION MEASURES

Examples:

- > mediation between groups
- > youth engagement activities
- > awareness sessions
- > conflict resolution meetings
- > coordinated action with local authorities

STEP 5 – ESCALATE WHEN LEGALLY REQUIRED

If criminal activity is confirmed:

- ✓ apply lawful investigation
- ✓ targeted enforcement
- ✓ proportional use of force

Remember: Prevention and enforcement should go hand in hand.



ANNEX 4B – DISTRICT PREVENTION ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

PLANNING PREVENTIVE POLICING ACTIVITIES

Purpose

This plan helps commanders transform analysis into structured action. It should be updated quarterly.

Identified Risk	Objective	Activity	Partners	Responsible Officer	Timeline	Indicator
Youth tensions	Reduce grievances	Youth dialogue forum	Chiefs, CSO	CP Officer	May	Attendance rate
Religious rumours	Prevent escalation	Interfaith meeting	Clergy	District Cmdr	Monthly	Incidents ↓

Planning principles

- ✓ focus on causes, not symptoms
- ✓ involve community partners
- ✓ define measurable outcomes
- ✓ review regularly

ANNEX 4C – PREVENTION COORDINATION MATRIX WORKING WITH OTHER ACTORS

Purpose

This matrix serves as a reminder that prevention requires multi-stakeholder cooperation. The police cannot act alone.

Issue	Lead Actor	Police Role	Partners	Coordination Method
Youth unemployment	Local government	Support engagement	NGOs	Monthly meetings
School radicalization risk	Education services	Awareness sessions	Teachers	Joint visits
Land disputes	Traditional authorities	Mediation support	Chiefs	Dialogue forums

Remember: The police should coordinate security responses, but they do not replace social services.

ANNEX 4D – COMMUNITY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT LOG

TRACKING EARLY WARNING INFORMATION RESPONSIBLY

Purpose

This log ensures information gathered through community policing is documented in an ethical and organized fashion.

Date	Source (community leader/youth/etc.)	Issue reported	Action taken	Follow-up date	Status

Rules

- ✓ protect confidentiality
- ✓ avoid stigmatization
- ✓ record actions taken
- ✓ review weekly

Remember: Information builds prevention capacity over time.



ANNEX 4E – PREVENTIVE COMMUNICATION GUIDE

COMMUNICATING DURING TENSIONS OR CRISES

Purpose

This guide demonstrates clear communication skills to prevent panic and misinformation.

Key principles

- ✓ be transparent
- ✓ communicate early
- ✓ avoid speculation
- ✓ reassure communities
- ✓ coordinate messaging

Example messages

In the event of rumours

“Police are aware of the situation and are working with community leaders to verify information. We encourage calm and cooperation.”

In the event of tensions

“We are engaging all parties to resolve concerns peacefully and ensure everyone’s safety.”

Avoid:

- ✗ blaming groups publicly
- ✗ sharing unverified information
- ✗ threatening language

ANNEX 4F – PREVENTION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARD

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY POLICING FOR PREVENTION

Purpose

This dashboard is designed to help commanders evaluate whether prevention efforts are working. It should be measured and completed quarterly.

Operational indicators

- > Number of community meetings held
- > Number of mediation cases conducted
- > Early warning reports received
- > Joint activities with community actors

Trust indicators

- > Community trust survey results
- > Increase in voluntary information sharing
- > Reduction in complaints against police

Security indicators

- > Reduction in violent incidents
- > Reduction in communal disputes
- > Early resolution of tensions

Remember: Trends matter more than numbers alone.

Improvement over time indicates effective prevention strategies.

ANNEX 4G – COMMANDER DECISION CHECKLIST

Purpose

This checklist should be used by commanders before taking enforcement action.

The following questions must be asked:

- Have we verified information?
- Have community leaders been consulted?
- Have preventive options been attempted?
- Is enforcement lawful and proportionate?
- Could this action damage community trust?
- Is communication prepared?

If several answers are NO → reconsider approach.



GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

To make this manual more accessible and clearer to use, this section provides a concise definition of some of the important concepts encountered throughout its pages. These explanations will allow both new and experienced readers to understand the language used in training and operational contexts.

- > **Community:** A group of individuals connected by a shared geography (such as a country, region, suburb, or neighbourhood) or common interests (including customs, values, religion, or needs). This group may include citizens, businesses, residents, and stakeholders
- > **Community-Oriented Policing:** A policing approach focused on building partnerships and trust with local communities to collaboratively address the causes of crime, disorder, and insecurity, rather than relying solely on enforcement
- > **Counterterrorism:** Safety and security measures specifically designed to target and mitigate the threats posed by terrorists
- > **Countering Violent Extremism (CVE):** Initiatives, policies, and interventions aimed at preventing and responding to radicalization and violence for extremist purposes, often through community engagement, education, and support services
- > **Deradicalization:** Safety and security measures aimed at changing the mindset and ideological beliefs of individuals who are already radicalized, helping them reject potential violent behaviours
- > **Disengagement:** Measures focusing on altering the behaviour of radicalized individuals to encourage them to leave violent extremist groups and refrain from violent actions, without necessarily changing their core beliefs
- > **Early Intervention:** Prompt actions taken when warning signs or vulnerabilities are identified – before criminal activity occurs – to steer individuals or groups away from paths that may lead to violent extremism
- > **Engagement:** The act of including stakeholders in activities and communications, allowing them to contribute meaningfully to discussions and decisions.
- > **Extremism:** Strict adherence to a set of narratives or belief systems – often political or religious – that challenge the mainstream values and principles of society
- > **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Any act of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or institutional violence directed at individuals or groups based on their biological sex or gender identity, often involving unequal power dynamics
- > **Gender Equality:** The equal enjoyment of human rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women, men, girls, and boys. It recognizes diverse interests, needs, and priorities, and is a fundamental human rights issue and a prerequisite for sustainable, people-centred development
- > **Gender Mainstreaming:** The process of evaluating the implications of any planned action – such as legislation, policies, and programmes – on women and men at all levels, aiming to integrate their concerns and experiences and achieve gender equality
- > **Jihad:** Meaning “struggle” in Arabic, jihad is made up of a lesser jihad (physical struggle) and a greater jihad (spiritual struggle). The term is often misinterpreted to refer solely to warfare.
- > **Law Enforcement Official:** Any appointed or elected officer exercising police powers, particularly those related to arrest or detention. Also includes military or state security forces where they exercise such powers
- > **Mediation:** A structured interactive process where an impartial third party assists disputing parties in resolving (a) conflict(s) through specialized communication and negotiation techniques
- > **Multi-Sectoral Cooperation:** Collaboration amongst various stakeholders – such as police, local authorities, civil society, educators, and traditional or religious leaders – to address security challenges in a comprehensive and coordinated manner

- > **Partnership-Building:** Fostering constructive working relationships between police and other community stakeholders to share information, resources, and responsibility for public safety and violence prevention
- > **Prevention:** Proactive strategies and actions aimed at addressing risk factors and reducing the likelihood of individuals or groups engaging in, supporting, or being affected by violent extremism or related crimes
- > **Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE):** Combines a PVE approach, which addresses long-term drivers of marginalization, with a CVE approach that responds to radicalized individuals who may or may not have committed violence. It allows for a strategic application of soft power interventions at various points along an individual's trajectory towards extremism
- > **Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE):** A comprehensive approach including security-based counterterrorism measures and systematic steps to address the factors leading individuals to join violent extremist groups, tackling structural causes such as political, social, or economic marginalization
- > **Pull Factors:** Elements that actively attract individuals to extremist groups, such as promises of belonging, identity, protection, income, or purpose
- > **Push Factors:** Conditions that create frustration, exclusion, or grievances, potentially driving individuals away from society or the state
- > **Radicalization:** The process through which individuals or groups move away from moderate beliefs and adopt extreme views. While radicalization can lead to violence, it does not equate to terrorism; many radicals express their concerns about societal issues without resorting to violence
- > **Radicalization Leading to Violent Extremism:** A stage in the radicalization process where individuals embrace violence as a legitimate means to achieving ideological goals. Many may reach a high level of radicalization without resorting to violence; violent extremism is just one possible path
- > **Radicalization vs. Extremism:** While often used interchangeably, radicalization and extremism differ. Radicals are sometimes seen as "open-minded," extremists as "close-minded". Non-violent extremism is sometimes called a "cognitive" form of radicalization
- > **Radicalism:** A deviation from mainstream political or religious thought. However, individuals with radical ideas do not necessarily seek to impose their views on others or engage in violence
- > **Resilience:** The capacity of individuals, communities, or institutions to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity, threats, or attempts to undermine social cohesion and safety
- > **Rule of Law:** A principle of governance where all individuals, institutions, and entities are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated, aligned with international human rights norms and standards
- > **Risk Reduction:** Steps taken to minimize the potential for harm or escalation by addressing vulnerabilities, strengthening community resilience and mitigating factors that could lead to violence or insecurity
- > **Terrorism and Terrorist Acts:** The unlawful use or threat of violence to generate fear and coerce societies or governments, often motivated by religious, political, or ideological beliefs. The UN does not provide an official definition. Therefore, perspectives on terrorist violence can vary
- > **Terrorism vs. Violent Extremism:** Terrorism is defined as the use of intimidation through violence to achieve a specific political objective. Violent extremism on the other hand, encompasses a broader ideology that opposes moderate societal values and may use terrorism as a tactic
- > **Violent Extremism:** The actions of extremists who resort to violence to coerce others into adopting their social, political, or economic objectives

The above glossary is intended as a living resource and should be expanded as new terminology or concepts emerge in the field. Furthermore, trainers and commanders are encouraged to adapt or supplement these definitions in line with local contexts and operational needs.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

This directory of resources and references provides police commanders, trainers, and stakeholders with essential references and contacts to support effective prevention and security initiatives. It also gives references to national policies, international guidelines, other training materials, and support agencies. This can help users stay informed, seek further specialist advice, and foster collaboration within the broader prevention and security community.

NATIONAL POLICIES

- > National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (Ghana): Outlines Ghana's strategic approach to address radicalization and violent extremism at national and community levels
- > National Security Strategy: Details Ghana's comprehensive security priorities, including community policing and risk reduction
- > Ghana Police Service Standard Operating Procedures: Provides official guidance for law enforcement bodies on managing security threats and fostering community engagement
- > National Peace Council Act: Establishes the council's mandate to promote peace, prevent conflict, and support reconciliation efforts nationwide

INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES

- > United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: A global framework emphasizing multi-sectoral prevention, human rights, and community resilience
- > African Union (AU) Counter Terrorism Framework: Regional guidelines for member states on countering terrorism and violent extremism
- > ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy: West African regional strategy for coordinated prevention, law enforcement, and cross-border cooperation
- > Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) Good Practices: Presentation of the best international practices for CVE and community policing

TRAINING MATERIALS

- > Community Policing and Prevention Manual (Ghana Police Service): Step-by-step resource for building partnerships and implementing preventive strategies
- > UNODC Counterterrorism E-Learning Platform: Free online courses for law enforcement and trainers on counterterrorism and CVE
- > ECOWAS Training Toolkit on Prevention and Response: Practical guides for police and local leaders, focusing on early intervention and risk assessment
- > International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) CVE Resources: Manuals and webinars on community engagement and violence prevention

SUPPORT AGENCIES AND CONTACTS

Ghana Police Service, Community Policing Unit

- > Email: communitypolicing@police.gov.gh
- > Phone: +233 302 773906

National Peace Council

- > Website: www.peacecouncil.gov.gh
- > Phone: +233 302 919395

FURTHER READING

- > “Preventing Violent Extremism in Ghana: Opportunities and Challenges” – Policy report by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
- > “Community-Based Approaches to Security in West Africa” – Article in the *African Security Review*
- > “Radicalization and Resilience: Lessons from the Sahel” – Research paper by the Institute for Security Studies
- > “Countering Violent Extremism: Good Practices in Africa” – Global Counterterrorism Forum publication

This directory is designed to be updated as new resources and contacts become available. Users are encouraged to contribute additional references and to regularly consult official websites for the latest information.



